THE PRACTICE Of CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Wherein

Several Considerations, Cautions, and Advices are set down,

For the perfecting of the Saints, and completing them in the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS.

By THOMAS WHITE, Minister of the Word of God.

THES. 3. 10. *Praying exceedingly, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.*

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The Dedicatory PRAYER.

LET not my Lord be angry, and I thy ſervant which am but duſt and aſhes, will ſpeak unto my Lord.

Bleſſed God, unto the glory of thy Name I dedicate and conſecrate all that I have, and do, and think, and ſpeak, and am, and in particular this Treatiſe, beſeeching thee to give me gifts, and ſtrength, and wiſdome, opportunity, and a heart to ſerve thee, that I may not be as a broken veſſell. And I beſeech thee, if thy ſervant hath found favour in thy ſight, grant

grant that whenſoever any one ſhall read this Treatiſe, thou wilt ſet in with ſuch overpowring workings of thy holy SPIRIT, that what they read may not be as a dead letter unto them, but that Thou wilt ſo prevaile with their hearts when they ſhall read it, that they may both underſtand and practiſe the things that belong to their peace.

Grant

Grant this, and more, for his sake in whom thou art well pleased. *Amen.*

To

To the Famous

UNIVERSITIES of this Land,

Grace, Mercy, Peace and Truth be multiplyed.

MEn, Brethren, and Fathers, when I consider that all men generally by Nature, and Universities by designe desire and endea-

endeavour to Know, and yet generally all live croſſe to that principle when they come to act in the matters of God, I cannot but be aſtoniſhed: for though the knowledg of him be demonſtrably the moſt excellent, yet, as the Apoſtle obſerveth, they like not to retain God in their knowledg, *Rom.* 1. 28. *A rationall Tract of Inſects, or any ſuch thing, is bought, and read, and ſtudied, admired and commended, whileſt the Word of God is a Book which men are rather aſhamed not to have, then delight to read and underſtand. Now the great miſchief of doting upon the knowledg of the*

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Creature, and despising the knowledge of the Creator, is, that as they did reprobate the knowledge of God, so God did give them up to a reprobate sense, as the Apostle speaketh in the following words. Wherfore, since the insatiable desire of knowledge and unsanctified learning is a snare, though it be looked upon as a harmlesse and an innocent thing, and in that respect the more dangerous, I shall crave leave to give some Christian advises for study.

Adv. I. *Get holiness before you get learning: for,*

1. *Except you be holy your learning it self is defiled and defileth.*

2. *It puffs up, It builds not up.*

3. *You must never think by Learning unsanctified to learn the things of God.* 1 Corin. 2. 14. *Nor will the Socinians distinction serve, that it is meant of carnall debauched men, for it is not σάρκινος, but ψύχικος.*

4. *If it were no hinderer it were far better, but it is an utter Enemy; nay it is not only an Enemy, but Enmity, yea enmities.* Romans 8. 7. *And indeed, an enemy may be reconciled, but Enmity never.* 2 Corinthians 10. 5. *It builds strong holds and Syllogisms against Gospel truths,*

and accounts the knowledge of Christ an illiterate thing. Pardon me if I desire to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. If I wrote to those that despise Learning, I should in that case shew them many great advantages humane Learning gives one, if sanctified, and that one might as well not make use of Riches as not of Learning in the service of God: yet since I write to you, whose great business is to get knowledg, I must say of that as it is said of Riches, If humane Learning increase, set not your hearts upon it. And though for a man to be holy is

no hinderance but rather a furtherance to him in the getting of learning; yet to be learned is a great hinderance to the getting of holineſſe, that is, if he be firſt learned before holy.

5. *Except you have holineſſe, you will be ſubject to run out to the wild and ungodly ſtudies of* Jacob Boheme, Aſtrology, &c. *for 'tis grace that directs the choyce and moderates the uſe of ſtudyes.*

6. *That of our Saviour carryes all before it,* Matth. 6.33. Seek ye firſt the Kingdome of God, and his righteouſneſſe, and all theſe things

things ſhall be added unto you. *But alas! how unproportionable and unſutable are the lives of Chriſtians to the rule of Chriſt, and how few doe account it their buſineſſe to be Chriſtians? But I have ſpoken of that in the following Treatiſe.*

II. Advice. *Take heed of making an idol of humane Reaſon: and that you do when you make God and all his Truths do homage to it; when you ſet Reaſon in the Throne, and bring Chriſt & his Truths to the Barr, to be judged by it. To ſhew the vanity of this, Conſider,*

1. *How much Reason is puzled in the works of Nature, as Reason calleth them, (for* David *saith,* God giveth him his body, *Psalm* 139. *And the Apostle saith,* Hee giveth to every seed its own body, 1 *Cor.* 15.) *Can any Philosoer tell me what it is to See, or Hear; and what those Species are they speak of? Nay, in the Mathematicks, where Reason sits in her Throne, yet even there are not onely many Problems which it cannot do, but also many Theorems which contradict known Principles: That wee should pass from one Extreme to another without passing by the midst, is contra-*

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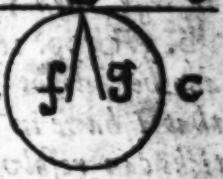
ry to a Principle; and yet it is neceſſary to be ſo, as by this Diagram ſhall appear. A right Line may make an Angle leſſe then a right Angle with a circumference, and an Angle bigger then a right Angle, but never equall, as f b a is leſſe then a right Angle, ſince it is but a part of f b d: now if you can draw a line that ſhall make an Angle with the Circumferente a b equall to a right Angle, let it be b g. Therefore ſince g b a is



equall to a right Angle, it is equall to f b d : *take away* f b a, *which is common to both ; therefore* a b d *and* f b g *are equall : but* a b d *is leſſe then* f b g. Euclid. lib. 3. prop. 16. *There is another doubt that no skill that I have in the Mathematicks can reſolve*, viz. *That a wheel of one inch the Semidiameter, ſhould meaſure nine yards, or any other diſtance in one revolution : Let there be three wheels fixed to the ſame axis, the middlemoſt an inch ſemidiameter, the two extreme wheeles each three yards the Diameter, let the middle wheel run upon a table,*

ble, and the two extreme wheels upon the ground: now it is certain the middle wheel ſlides not, nor ſtands ſtill when the others move, and yet it makes as long a line in its revolution as the others do.

2. *Some things, even in the very wiſdome of men would ſeem to be very folly, if ſo be the reaſon of their actions were not diſcovered to us. I am confident, that Sentence of* Solomon *concerning the two women would ſeem fooliſh, cruell, and unjuſt, if one had gone away ſo ſoon as ever that Sentence had been pronounced: for were it not very cruell and unjuſt to deprive*

a mother of her child? an Infant of its life, for no default of either? and foolish, for would not the living child be dead when it was divided into half? and so each mother would have but two halfs of two dead Children in stead of one having one whole dead child. And it would have required no lesse then Solomons *wisedome to finde out the reason of that sentence, and it was one part of it to give such a sentence that might least seem to do what he intended, lest the mother that pretended to the living Childe, discovering his design, might give such an answer*

that

that ſhould not diſcover what Solomon *intended to manifeſt: So ſome of the wayes of God, the reaſons of them are paſt finding out, except by the ſame wiſdome that contrived them; nay it may be, God doth ſome things on purpoſe to deceive humane reaſon, and that ſome of the reaſons of his ways are ſo full of wiſdome, that were they revealed, we were no more able to underſtand them, then a child of three yeers old, could underſtand ſome propoſitions in* Euclid, Vietta, Cartes, Apolonius, *or* Archimedes.

3. *It ſeems that God hath*

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ſo ordered matters, that except we love him and his truths there ſhall be ſuch objections, that the wit of man can never anſwer. I ſhall give you an inſtance of this both in the ſpeculative and practicall part of Religion, Deuter. 13. ver. 1,2,3. *If wee might diſcover the deceit of that Prophet by humane reaſon or wiſdome, without the love of God being in us, how could it prove whether wee did love GOD or no, if wee could finde out the fallacy of that deceit without love?* 2. *In the* 2d *of* Theſſal. 2. 10, 11. God will ſend ſtrong deluſions, *that thoſe which love not the truth,*

truth, be they never so learned, shall not be able to know it; for if so be it were said they should professe lyes, it might be, that they knew the truth though they professed the contrary; but it is said, they beleeved lyes. Our Saviour gives this reason why hee would manifest himselfe to his Disciples, and not to the world, viz. *because the world did not love him,* John 14. 22,23. *For none will unbosome himselfe unto an Enemy, nor mayst thou think to master God by thy Learning, and know him whether he will or no; for God must manifest himselfe, or else thou*

canst

canst never know him, and he will not manifest himselfe to thee except thou love him, though thou beest never so learned or great a Politician, Mat. 11. 25. *For you must understond, it is not a speculative knowledge, but a knowledge of acquaintance. So in that sense is that saying of our Saviour verified,* Matth. 7. 23. *And this knowledge of God is not got by study, but by prayer and meditation, by an inward strict communion with God, and the friends of God the Saints, but especially with Christ the Son of God, for he is the expresse Image of God the Father, &c. Can we be acquainted*

quainted with a man whether he will or no: nor can we be throughly acquainted with a wise holy man, that is, we cannot know his wisdome and holinesse without much observing and pondering his words and actions, nor can we much observe and be acquainted with any with whom wee do not dwell and have private Conference. Thou mayst know God to discourse of him, and to write learned tracts, yet if thou art not acquainted with God, at the last day God will not know thee: Therefore be much with God, and to that purpose, I have one humble and earnest

neſt requeſt to you, though I need not be very earneſt to obtaine ſo ſmall one, it is, that you would ſpend an hour every day in prayer, meditation, and ſearching out the inward ſpirituall corruptions of your owne heart, and an impartiall examining what intereſt you have in Chriſt, and ſuch like ſpirituall exerciſes; do not you ſay, How can you prove that we are bound to ſpend one hour every day? For 1. Suppoſe God, when you goe to prayers, ſhould anſwer you ſo, How can you prove that I am bound to give you ſuch a mercy?

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Thou mayst cause God to carry himselfe as froward by this froward answer, for it is said, With the froward he will shew frowardnesse. 2. *How wilt thou spend eternity in the admirings, adoreings and praysings of God, if an hour spent so, is now so irksome to thee? how shall it then be thine Heaven, if it be now thine hell?* 3. *Is it a friendly answer? If a friend should come to desire a courtesie of you, do you so answer him? how can you prove that I am bound to do it?* 4. *Consider, This is the question of a slave to ask; What must I do? but the question of a friend*

friend and a child is, What may I doe to please my Father or my friend? 5. Keepe this answer untill the World or the Flesh come unto thee; give this answer to those thine enemies, and not to thy God. 6. Dost thou stand out? Shall the great and holy God be ready and willing to meet thee, and have communion with thee as often and as long as thou pleasest, and shalt thou refuse? It should be his part, one would think, to be hard to be intreated, not thine: Shall he account it his riches to bestow mercies on thee, and thou account it thy trouble to receive them? 7. Do but doe that which

which thou art bound to do; viz. *Love God with all thy ſoul, with all thy minde, and with all thy ſtrength*; *and then thou wilt aſk, not, Why ſo much? but, Why no more? And indeed, when once thou haſt found the ſweetneſſe and profit, thou thy ſelf wilt not onely continue, but increaſe theſe holy duties: and that is the reaſon why I propoſe no more time, becauſe I ſuppoſe this being ſpiritually ſpent, more will follow of it ſelf.* David *wiſheth us to taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is, not becauſe he would not have us feed on him, but becauſe if wee once taſte how good he is, hee*

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supposeth it needless to wish us to feed on him. 8. *If thy friend comes to visit thee, thou wilt afford him an hour with thanks: he comes in his own name, but I come unto thee in my fathers, desiring thee to afford God as much; if thou denyest, that saying of our Saviour belongs unto thee,* John 5. 43. I am come in my Fathers name, and ye receive me not; if another come in his owne name, him ye will receive.

To conclude, I desire to speak one word more as to humane Learning, which I account of singular use for the understanding of the word of God, and

and have doted on it as much as any, and love it still, as much as I dare, for I account the love of it dangerous, the use of it very advantageous; and could I set down how far I have gone in it with the same spirit that Saint Paul *doth set down,* (Phil. 3.) *his excellencies in legall priviledges and righteousnesse, I would; but I account it safer for me to be thought wholly ignorant, then to venture priding my self of that small knowledge I have: yet thus much I conceive of humane Learning, that besides the incertainty of it, there are many in-*

inconveniences incident to it. 1. Our thoughts are wholly taken up with it when wee are studying of it, which are not necessarily so in other employments; for one may buy, and sell, and yet have our mindes often upon GOD, even in the very midst of those employments. 2. Men generally judge of the truths and wayes of Gods Worship according to that way of Learning wherein they excell. Those who excell in the Fathers and Church Histories, are subject to admit of the Truths and Wayes of GOD's Worship, because they are attested and warranted

wanted by them: Those who most excell in Phyloſophy and Schoole Divinity, they make Reaſon the touchſtone to try even Goſpell truths by; yet I doe much eſteem of theſe Egyptian Jewells, ſo wee make not an Idoll of them, and fall downe and worſhip them. 3. *And laſtly, I finde it as hard a thing to deny humane Learning as to get it.* Moſes *is much to be admired, who being brought up in all the Learning of the* Egyptians, *yet preached ſo plainely as you may ſee in* Deuteronomy: *and* Paul, *who preached ſo very plaine, that his adverſa-*

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ries objected it againſt him. Conſider what is ſaid, and the Lord give you underſtanding in all things.

Your Servant

in the Lord,

THOMAS WHITE.

A DIRECTORY TO Christian Perfection.

MATT. 5. VER. 48.

Be ye therfore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

A Malicious Christian and a courteous Cynick are expressionsequally including contradiction; yet notwithstanding, it is too manifest,

feſt, that thouſands that honour themſelves with the name of Chriſtians, diſhonour God, and by their works deny their very name; for if the leaſt injury be offered them either in word or in deed, though in paſſion, how do they ſoame and rage, like the troubled Sea, while they are revenged of the injury? But our Saviour here doth abundantly condemn, and give rules to the contrary, from ver. 43. to the end of the Chapter. A brief expoſition whereof ſhall ſerve both for the proſecution of the point, and introduction to the text. In the 43. ver. our Saviour ſayes, *That you have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*: our Saviour does not ſay that ever it was *ſaid* ſo; for there is not any place in Scrip-

ture where we are commanded to hate our enemy; and there are three things wherein their glosse is faulty.

First is, that they restrain the word *Neighbour*, to one of their own kindred or nation, which our Saviour fully confutes in the tenth of *Luke*, in the parable of the good Samaritan.

Secondly, they leave out, *as thy selfe.*

Thirdly, they put in, *thou shalt hate thine enemy*; whereas there is nothing in the scripture for it, but many places against it: *Exod.* 23. ver. 4, 5. *If thou meetest thine enemies Ox or his Ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it backe to him again. If thou seest the Asse of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help*

with him. And whereas some say it was to be meant of an *Israelite*, if he be an enemy, but not of those of other Nations, but that they might hate them; the contrary is evident, *Deut.* 10. v. 19. *Love ye therfore the strangers, for yee were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

Use. The use of this is, That every one should read the Word of God, for if he only hears the Word, and searches not the Scripture, he shal hear that many things are said in the Word of God, which are no where there to be found; but divers times the cleane contrary.

Argu. So the first argument against revenge is, that from the *Alpha*, & beginning of *Genesis*, to the *Omega* and Amen of the *Revelations*, there is not one syllable to war-

warrant us in such practises, but they are diametrically opposite to the doctrine of the Gospel, as you have it in the next verse; *But I say unto you*: as if Christ should say, Whatsoever thoughts your own corruption suggests unto you, or whatsoever men shal say unto you, it matters not, they are likely enough to blow the least sparke of contention into a flame; they haply wil tel you, that if you bear one injury you invite another. *But I say unto you, Love your enemies*, besides, there is an *Emphasis* in the words, *I* and *you*; for it hath the same force to move us to love our enemies, *Mat.* 11. 33. He that hath loved us, and gave himself for us when we were his enemies, may he not justly exspect and command from us that we should love our enemies?

that we ſhould forgive an hundred pence when he commands us ſo to do, that hath forgiven us ten thouſand talents. But to the further expoſition of the following words, we are to love our enemies, be they never ſo many we muſt love them all, and be they never ſo much ones enemies, for here is no limitation put either in reſpect of their number or enmity, or in reſpect of our love; it is not ſaid how much we ſhould love them, to ſhew that wee ſhould love them without meaſure.

Reaſ. Now the reaſon why *love your enemies* is put firſt, is becauſe that this muſt have an influence upon all the reſt; we muſt bleſs them that curſe us, do good to them that hate us, upon this very ground, and from this princi-

ple,

pse, becauſe wee love them.

But if our enemies curſe us, then we are not to content our ſelves with a bare inward love to them, but we muſt ſhew our love by our outward expreſſions; and as our enemies encreaſe in the manifeſtations of their enmity, ſo we muſt encreaſe in the manifeſtations of our love, and we muſt not only not curſe again, or be ſilent, and neither bleſſe nor curſe, but we muſt bleſs them that curſe us: nor is it ſet down how much, how often, nor when we muſt bleſs, that we might put no limits to our bleſſing in any of theſe reſpects: and as before it is obſerved concerning our enemies, be they never ſo many, and never ſo much our enemies, we ought to love them; for the ſame obſervations may runne

thorow all the reſt of the branches of this precept, nor doth our Saviour wiſh us to reprove thoſe that curſe us, but to bleſſe them.

Firſt, Becauſe reproofs at ſuch a time are very unſeaſonable; for doubtleſſe there is a time to reprove.

Secondly, Generally becauſe reproofs at ſuch times when people are curſing of us, are a kind of revenge taken of them, eſpecially, if it be before others; for wee lay open their ſhame.

Thirdly, Becauſe this is the mildeſt, the ſecreteſt, and lovingeſt way of reproofe; for I remember, the rule is given, that one ſhould not, if one hears one ſpeak a word of Latine wrong, tell him that he pronounces it not as it ſhould be pronounced, much leſſe

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to tell him that he is an Ignorant man, but ſpeedily to take ſome occaſion to ſpeake that word right; ſo here, if thine enemy ſpeak falſe Chriſtian language thy mildeſt way to ſhew him his errour, is by ſpeaking thoſe words right which he hath ſpoke wrong; for by thy bleſſing him, thou doeſt in a milde manner ſhew that he ſhould have bleſſed thee.

The next branch is, that wee ſhould *do good to them that hate us*: many are willing to give good words, but they will not do any good deeds to their enemies, they will ſerve God of that which coſt them nought; but in the Originall it is not, Do *good* to them that hate you, but do *well*; to ſhew us that if we do our enemy good, yet if we do it in a churliſh and ſcornfull manner, we do not ob-

obſerve his commandment: But if thine enemy ſhall have blocked up this way, becauſe he ſcorns to receive, or by reaſon of his perſecution hath diſabled thee to beſtow any temporall courteſie upon him, then take another way, and doe him that courteſie which he cannot reject; for though one cannot give a man money who will not receive it, yet one may pray, and ones prayers may be powerfull to do our enemies good whether they will or no; ſo that thou canſt never be ſo impoveriſh'd by perſecution, but thou art worth a prayer; nor thine enemy can hardly be ſo obſtinate, but thy prayers may faſten bleſſings on him: doe thine enemy as much good as thou canſt, & what thou canſt not do, deſire God to do for him. It followes

lowes, *That ye may be the children of your Father.*

First, it is not meant as if we could love our enemies before we were Gods children, or that this is the way to get adoption or regeneration; for he calls God their Father when he wishes them to do thus, that they may be his children; therefore the meaning may be thus: First, that you may be, *id est*, that you may be known to be both to your selves and others; as it is said, *We are justified by works, id est*, our justification is knowne to our selves and others by works; or so that you may be children, is meant, that since two wayes we are the children of God, by adoption, and sanctification; in respect of sanctification we may have the image of God renewed more and more

more in us, and ſo in a qualified ſenſe may be ſaid more to be Gods children; & in that ſenſe we may attain to be more the children of God, *id eſt*, more like him.

Secondly, None can be the children of God unleſs they love their enemies.

Thirdly, That every one ſhould ſtrive both to be, and to know himſelfe to be the child of God.

Fourthly, That no man by nature is the child of God, ſince no man by nature can or does love his enemy, as it follows, *which is in heaven.*

Firſt, We can never love our enemies, ſo long as we are no more then the children of our earthly father.

Secondly, That it is an heavenly thing to love ones enemies, and there-

therfore *ex diametro*, an helliſh thing to hate ones friends, and therfore to hate Gods people.

1. Becauſe they are our friends.

2. They are heavenly.

3. This is the firſt motive to perſwade to love, &c. And as it follows; *for he makes his Sun to ariſe.*

Firſt, This is that ſecond motive to the duty, *id eſt*, Gods Example; and it ſtands thus; If God who is greater then you, does beſtow greater bleſſings upon thoſe that are greater enemies, and between whom and him there is a greater diſtance, how much more ſhould you love, &c?

Secondly, The Sun doth not ariſe of it ſelfe, that knows not what it does, nor is it of neceſſity that the Sun ſhould ariſe; of neceſſity, it is in reſpect of the Sun, not

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in respect of God, for he make it to arise; so that the Sun cannot choose but arise, but God might choose whether he would make it arise.

Thirdly, These common blessings come not by chance, as well as not by necessity; it is by Gods providence that we enjoy them.

Fourthly, It shews the continuall concurrence and power of God with naturall causes, it is not like a clock, which when it is once wound up, will go of it selfe by the weight; but as a pen, that writes not without the continuall guidance of the writer; so God did not at the first create the World, Sun, &c. and so without his actuall concurrence to every particular act enable them to do it, so that the Sun did not

arise

riſe at the firſt moment of its creation more immediately by the power and providence of God, then it does now, this advances Gods goodneſſe; for as one that hath ſetled maintenance upon an Hoſpitall for the poore, it argues not ſo much patience in him, to ſuffer the men there if they abuſe him to receive their ſetled ſtipend, as it does for him daily to feed them with his own hand, and to put mony into one of their hands, while the other is lif againſt him.

Fifthly, Or may not he make it be taken in this ſenſe? that all the creatures of God are enemies to the wicked; the earth will not bear them, but open her mouth and ſwallow them; the fire will not warme them, but conſume them; the Sunne will

will not give light unto them, as it did once in Egypt, while they had light in Goſhen; but God, as it were, *renuente ſole*, doth make it ariſe upon the good and the bad; it ſhews the great power of God, that not only the things on earth, but all the creatures in heaven and earth obey him: he that can make the Sunne ariſe, what can he not do? *Nehemiah* 9.6. As it followes; *His Sun to ariſe.*

Firſt, *à fortiori*, it is a Motive to us to do good to our enemies.

Reaſ. Firſt, Becauſe that which we give or beſtow on them in reſpect of God, we have no right to, we are but his Stewards, and *what have we that we have not received?* we have the poſſeſſion of al thoſe things we have, but not the diſpoſing of them: in reſpect of the poor,

to

to give them alms is charity, in reſpect of God it is juſtice. But you ſee here the Sun is called *his Sun*, he hath a ful title to it: if he therefore gives that which is his own, and is Lord of, much more ſhould we deliver that, of which we are only Stewards, when he that is the Lord commands us.

Secondly, Conſider what he gives; it is his Sun, the greateſt of al temporal bleſſings in the world; for we might longer live without food or raiment, then without the benefit of the Sun; for without his heat all things would immediatly freeze to death: nay, not only by giving the wicked the benefit of the Sunne, they enjoy that heat which is neceſſary for life, but they enjoy the light of the Sunne, which is a thing of orna-

ornament and pleasure, to make their life comfortable, *Eccle.* 11. 7. Therefore if God gives the wicked things of ornament, much more give your enemy bread, *Romans* 12. 20. No man not only cannot, but doth not offer to lay claime to the Sun: and as it follows, *On the good and the bad*: some will say, how can it be otherwise? for if the Sunne shines upon the good, how can it but shine upon the bad also, since they are in one Kingdome, in one Towne, in one house? but God is not necessitated to bestow this mercy upon the bad, though he bestowes it upon the good; For *de facto*, God did make it darke in Egypt when it was light for three dayes in Goshen, though they were of the same Kingdome; the cloud gave

light

light to the *Iſraelites* in their March, and at the ſame time was darkneſs to the *Egyptians*, Exod. 14. 19,20. Beſides, God can ſtrike all wicked men with blindneſſe, ſo that the Sunne ſhall be in reſpect of his light, as if it was not to them: and he might ſtrike them with ſuch a burning feaver as he threatens, *Deuter.* 28. 22. that for its heat the Sunne ſhould be worſe to them, then if it was not, and thouſand other wayes known to the Lord.

Secondly, We ſee that by common and temporal bleſſings, the good are not diſtinguiſhed from the bad.

Thirdly, It followes that wicked and unjuſt men are Gods enemies, and curſe God, hate God, perſecute God, and deſpite-

despitefully use him; or else it would not follow from this example of Gods dealing with wicked men, that we should love our enemies, &c. For one might say, it is true, God makes his Sun to shine upon the bad and unjust, but though indeed they be Gods enemies, yet they do not hate him, curse, &c. as mine do me.

Thirdly, That God may be said to bless, and do good to those that are bad and unjust, *Deut.* 10. 17. *Acts.* 14. 17. And as it followes; *He sendeth rain.*

First, God bestows not one, but many blessings upon the wicked, he doth not only make the Sun to arise, but sends also the rain upon them; nay, by bestowing this second blessing, he takes off that

that inconvenience which otherwise would follow upon the enjoyment of the first; nay they do help mutually one another; for the rain cooles the heat of the Sun, and the Sun warms the coolnesse of the raine, and both together make the earth fruitfull: from hence we may learn,

First, To doe great and many benefits to our enemies.

Secondly, Not to do them such courtesies that we know wil bring mischiefes upon them; and to do them good in one thing, on purpose to do them hurt in another.

Thirdly, We should do good to those that do not only not thank us for courtesies, but attribute it to others; for God does so, he makes

makes his Sunne to ſhine, and his raine to fall, not only upon thoſe that are ſo bad as not to be thankful for them, but are ſo exceeding unjuſt as not to account God the Author of them. The obſervations concerning Gods making the Sunne to ariſe, &c. *Mutatis mutandis*, may agree to this later part of the verſe; this may alſo be obſerved, that God doth not only give temporall bleſſings to thoſe that ask and come for them, but he ſends his mercies home to their very doors; for the cloudes that ariſe from the Sea, or other places, he cauſes his winds to carry them to their habitations. Beſides, this may be obſerved, that one reaſon why our Saviour inſtances in theſe bleſſings rather then in others, may be, not only

ly the reasons before, but this also, that we might never want a Motive to our doing good to our enemies; for whether it raines, or shines, we have either the instance of Gods making the Sunne to shine, or his rain to fall upon wicked men; as it follows, *Upon the just and unjust.*

First, It is not set down here as contradistinguished, as if there were some bad that were not unjust, and some unjust that were not bad; nor is it meant, God makes his Sunne to arise on the bad, and sends his raine upon the unjust, bestowes some kind of these blessings upon some wicked, and the other kind upon other wicked men, but he bestowes both upon all; as before it is not meant, we should love

our

our enemies, but not love those that curse us; or blesse those that cursed us, but not blesse those that hate us; but as when God commands us to blesse them that curse us, and does not say, doe good to them that curse you, it is because blessing is directly opposed to cursing; and so it is more likely to make him that curses see his error, because contraries being placed one by another, make each other more apparent, as it is before shewn, and as it followes; *for if ye love them that love you*: The former argument was from the example of Almighty God, whom all confesse in all things to do well; there he brings an argument from them whom all condemn, and the argument stands thus; You all desire and expect to be rewarded

ded for your workes, but none of you think that the Publicans shall have any reward, therefore neither you, if you love them that onely love you, for so do they.

Secondly, It is good to make use of that evill opinion wee have of others, as a Motive to our selves to be better.

Thirdly, That the wickedest man may have something good in him, but nothing perfect, and as it followes; *What reward have ye?* Christ doth not set it down positively, that they have no reward, but by way of Question to shew them that it is not onely his judgment, but their owne, for he appeales to their owne consciences; and it shewes the manifestnesse of the

truth, since self-love doth cast such a mist before our eyes when we are to judge of things concerning our selves, that except the truth doth shine very bright, we cannot behold it; it is not said, what great reward, but what reward: to shew them that they should be so farre from expecting everlasting life, that they cannot expect any reward at all.

Thirdly, It is not said, what reward shall yee have, but what have yee; to shew that they are not to expect so much as a temporall reward for loving their friends.

Fourthly, They have temporall blessings as Motives to obedience, but none by way of reward for obedience; for it is not said, What blessings, but what

what reward have you; for if one say of your righteousnes you do, Do not the Publicans the same? one may say of your blessings, Have not the Publicans the same? Do not even the Publicans the same? The Publicans were such as used to receive custome, tribute-money, and other taxes, and were men very odious to the Jewes, both for their injustice and oppression of them, and they were generally Heathens, because the Jewes did abhorre to have any hand in the oppressing of their own Nation; nay, our Saviour joynes them with Harlots, Sinners, Heathens; and if you salute your brethren onely, the word translated *salute*, signifies to kisse and embrace; and our Saviour doth signifie by it all

outward expreſſions of love.

Secondly, By *Brethren* is meant our near kindred and acquaintance.

Thirdly, this word *only* is to be referred as well to the former verſe as to this; and the obſervations (*mutatis mutandis*) upon that may be applyed to this. And ſo I come to the words of the text, *Be ye perfect*, &c.

In the handling of theſe words, I ſhall ſhew theſe things.

Firſt, How we muſt be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Secondly, in the preſſing of Chriſtian perfection, three things I ſhall ſet downe. Firſt, Severall Conſiderations. Secondly, Severall Cautions. Thirdly, Severall Rules or Adviſes

Before

Before I come to the Exposition of the words, to shew how we must be perfect as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect, I must remove an Objection that quarrels against the perfection of this rule of perfection; *viz.* First, That this rule is too high: Secondly, It is dangerous: Thirdly, That it is imperfect and too short.

First, It is too high: for what man or Angel is able to be as perfect as God? It is not compatible to any created nature, for that being finite, cannot possibly be capable of infinite perfection; for his glorious name is exalted above all blessing and praise, *Neh.* 9. 5. And the Lord is fain to dwell in thick darkness, and thereby doth *connivere radios suæ gloriæ*; and the Angels also do cover

their faces with their wings, or elſe they were not able to behold his glory, their underſtanding would be dazled: if therfore they are not able to behold his glory in its ful ſtrength and vigour, how much leſſe are they able to attain it? how much leſſe able are we that are ſinfull duſt and aſhes, who are not able to behold (that which is darkeneſſe in compariſon of God) the Sunne, to be perfect as God is perfect?

Firſt, I anſwer, That we are here commanded to attaine the ſame kind, not the ſame degrees of perfection: it is not, Be as perfect as your Father; but, be perfect as your Father; we are to go in the ſame ſteps, though not *æquis paſſibus*, his example is the copy we ſhould write by; though

though it be impossible to write so curious an hand, yet we may write the same words &c.

Secondly, It is an advantage to have so perfect a copy set us, though we cannot attain it, for who is there that learns to write, that blames the exactnesse of the copy he writes by? And he that taketh aime and shooteth at the highest point or Zenith of the Heaven, will shoote higher with the same strength then he that shootes at a levell, or any other point besides.

Thirdly, It addes to the holinesse of any action, that we desire in that action to be like to God, and upon that ground to desire to be holy because God is holy.

Secondly, You may say, it is a dangerous rule, for we may not strive to be like unto God in many things; we may not desire our own glory as he doth; *Adam* desiring to be like him, it was his sin and his fall. I answer to that, that there are two kinds of perfections in God, communicable and incommunicable: incommunicable are called those, not which the creature cannot have, but which the creature ought not to have, as to do all things for its own glory; for a creature may do all things for its own glory, but ought it not so to do; not onely because it is folly in the creature to do so; for glory is a thing of ornament, & man is a poor creature that wants things necessary; and it is folly for man to buy Jewels to adorn him, while he is ready to starve for

for want of garments to cloath him; but it is becauſe it is incommunicable to the creature; that is, God and the creature cannot do things for their own glory without thwarting one another; for if man do things for his own glory, then it muſt needs follow that he doth it not for the glory of God, and ſo thwarts the end that God propoſeth to himſelfe, and to all creatures, *viz.* his own glory: ſo that here when our Saviour commands us to be perfect as he is perfect, it is meant, that we ſhould endeavour to attain thoſe perfections which our having doth not hinder his having of them, as holineſſe, patience, wiſdom, &c. for our holineſſe, be it never ſo great, makes not God leſſe holy; but the more we ſeek our owne

glory, the more wee rob God of his.

Secondly, I anſwer, that all theſe kinds of perfections which are incommunicable, are rather reſultancies and conſequences of perfection, then perfections; for it is more proper to ſay, that becauſe God is infinitely perfect, therefore all the heaven and earth ſhould praiſe him; then to ſay, becauſe heaven and earth doth praiſe him, therfore he is infinitely perfect; for the praiſes which are given unto him, are not the cauſes of his perfection, but his infinite perfections are the cauſes of his praiſes.

Thirdly, It may be objected, That it is an imperfect rule, for it ſeems to come ſhort.

Firſt,

First, In respect of our relations; as of husband, wife, child, subject, how can we have an example of God in these particulars, since he is not capable of these relations?

Secondly, in respect of duties; we are to pray, to worship, to hear the Word.

Thirdly, In respect of graces; repentance, faith, hope, patience in afflictions; all these are below him.

I answer, First, that though we have not an example of any of these from God, considered in himself, yet we have of most of these from Christ, who was God as well as Man; for we have an example, how to carry our selves in afflictions, of obedience both to God and man, and those relations

lations which our Saviour left us no example of in a temporall way, yet in a myſticall way he hath: though he was not a Magiſtrate, nor an husband in a temporall way, yet in a myſtical way he is both Lord and husband to the Church.

And as for thoſe graces which ſuppoſe ſin, as repentance doth, our Saviour hath left us an example of thoſe graces, which if we obtain, they wil certainly produce repentance in us, and enable to carry our ſelves in all duties and in all our relations as becometh Chriſtians; ſo that as one that ſhould teach us to write, and ſet us exact Copies, we ſhould not quarrell with him and ſay, that he hath been a defective Schoole-Maſter, becauſe that ſome of thoſe words that afterward we have occaſion

casion to write, were never in those Copies that he set us; sufficient it is for him to vindicate himselfe and say, that I have taught you all those Letters, and all those severall joynings, which will spel and make up that word that you are to write, whatsoever it be; so Christ hath left us an example of al those graces, which are able to spel and make up any duty or grace we stand in need of. there are the ingredients, of which all compositions may be made up, if we follow Christ in our love to God and our hatred to sin, our godly sorrow for sin wil necessarily follow, & be made up of these two ingredients, thogh Christ for his part had never any occasion to use such a composition for himself, having never need of that physick: and so I come, the ob-

jection being removed, to the pro-
ſecuting of the point, to ſhew how
we ſhould be perfect as our Fa-
ther which is in heaven is perfect.

Firſt, in reſpect of the kinds of perfections, they muſt be ſpiri-tuall and divine: carnall, cor-porall, or civill, or morall perfe-ctions are two low for a Chriſti-an to look at, eſpecially to make it his buſineſs, or the marke he ſhootes at: morall vertues were the higheſt perfections of the Heathens; but alas morall ver-tues transforme us not, they change not our natures, but on-ly gild our rottenneſſe; though one be never ſo good a natured man, as they call it, if one has not the divine nature, one is but a tame Divell; for one is his child, if ones nature be not ſanctified, and our perſon juſti-fied,

fied, and so become the childe of God by regeneration and adoption; and the most excellentest act that is meerly, morally vertuous, is sinne, and cannot please God: Let me give a Simile to make this evident; A great Emperour commands his Empresse to come to him, as *Ahasuerus* did Queen *Vasthi*; his commands not prevailing, he entreats her, after that sends his Letters full of love and importunity, sends Embassadors after Embassadors, and lest those should fail, sends her many gifts very rich and magnificent, and thus he continues week, month, year after year, yet she utterly refuses; but after her rejecting and slighting all these wayes of love from the Emperour her husband, there comes a base slave, from whose

whose company her husband had especially forewarn'd her, because she had formerly committed folly with him, and dishonoured both her self and the Emperour, this adulterer and traytor speaks but half a word to her to go, and she presently without delay and with joy goes, when she perceives it would please the slave. What do you think now? do you think the Emperor wil be pleased with her, coming upon those terms? this is the case of all men that are no more then morally vertuous. God perswades us to be just, and to defraud no man, he entreats us, sends the Embassadors the Ministers unto us, giveth us mercy upon mercy, sends us his Word, his Epistles from Heaven, line upon line to perswade us to do justice, or to be temperate:

not

not we, for his ſake we will do nothing: The world comes, the world, which is a ſlave to Satan, for he is a Prince and Ruler of the darkneſs of this world; the world, with which we have committed ſo often ſpirituall whoredom, and againſt which God hath ſo often and ſeriouſly forewarned us; now only upon a ſuppoſition that we ſhould pleaſe the world if we are juſt or temperate, we wil be intemperately temperate, if I may ſo ſay, even to macerate our bodies with faſting, for a good look of the world; we do indeed in being temperate or juſt, do that which God commands, but far are we from pleaſing him, conſidering the grounds from which we do it; for can he be pleaſ'd that we ſhould do more for a good look of the world, then we would

for

for all the wayes of love that he took with us; nay indeed, never to do any one action for his ſake; nay but before his face at the ſame time when we refuſe all his entreaties, &c. to do it at the firſt word of the world; therefore morall vertues, conſidering the ground upon which they were done, are ſinnes before God; therefore let us learn not to be vertuous as Philoſophers were vertuous, but holy as God is holy.

Secondly, The perfections of God are infinite, ſo muſt ours as farre as it is poſſible for creatures to attain; our deſires of holineſſe muſt be without limits, we muſt not ſet bounds to our holineſſe, ſaying, Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no further: but we muſt alwayes hun-

hunger and thirst after righteousnesse.

Thirdly, God hath all perfections, or rather is all perfections: so we must adde to our faith vertue, to vertue knowledg, to knowledge temperance, &c. We must receive from Christ grace for grace, as a child receives from his father limb for limb, part for part; the same parts that the fathers body hath, the childs hath also, the same for number, figure, and position, though neither for strength, nor bignesse: and as God is the act of all possible absolute perfections, either in degree or in kinde, so we should endeavour to have those perfections that a creature of that kind is capable of.

Fourthly, As the perfections of God are both inseparable from God

God, and from themſelves, ſo ſhould ours be alſo; our wiſdom muſt be holy, our holineſſe innocent, our wiſdom zealous and our zeal wiſe; for we muſt not conceive that ſome of Gods actions are holy, others wiſe, but all are all; his wiſdom is holy, juſt, & good; his juſtice, holy, good and wiſe, and every attribute is as inſeparably united to all the reſt of his attributes, as any of them are to his Eſſence: as if there were an hundred Suns ſhining at once in the firmament, one could not ſay that one of theſe Sunnes ſhined in this part of the ayre, and another in that, but the light of every one of them would be in every point of the ayre; nor could you poſſible take away the light of one of the Suns, and leave the reſt, unleſs you could take a-

way

way the Sun it self: so it is in Gods perfection: but thy glorious Name is exalted above all knowledge, above all blessing, and above all praise.

Many men will be zealous, but without knowledg; others will be wise, but without zeal; and so their wisedomes come to be no better then carnal, sensuall, and divelish: the former zeal was that zeal of the Jews, *Rom.* 10.2. The other wisedome was the wisedome of *Pilate*; both of them crucified Christ.

Lastly, For I do not intend to be large in these parallels, but make haste to presse the great point of Christian perfection; we must be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect, notwithstanding all hinderances or provocations to the contrary; though

though God by his wisdome governs and orders all things, not a spire of grasse, or blade of wheat grows but by him, 1. Cor. 15.38. Not a sparrow falls on the ground, nor an hair from our head, but by his providence; not a lilly is cloathed in the field, nor a fowle of the ayre is fed but by him; yet notwithstanding such an innumerable number of creatures, are both in respect of their essence and operations, nay even in respect of the smallest circumstances of either, are acted, governed, and ordered continually by his providence; yet he doth no lesse know, love, and enjoy himselfe, then he did from all eternity, before there was any creature for his providence to watch over: so should we do, we should not have our thoughts lesse fixed

ed on God, or our love lesse fervent; our communion with God should be neither remitted nor intermitted by the imployments in the world; Mothers that have their little children to look to, should be like the Angels, which alwayes behold the face of our Father which is in heaven, *Mat.* 18. 11. But I come (as I promised) to the great businesse of this Treatise. *viz.* The pressing of Christian perfection, which is almost forgotten, and nothing left of it but the forme of godlinesse; and I shall referre the whole discourse to these three heads.

First, Severall Considerations.
Secondly, Severall Cautions.
Thirdly, Severall Advises.

Considerations.

1. *Consid.* Let us consider what the

the word of God ſpeaks in this matter, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drinke, or whatſoever ye do, doe all to the glory of God*: do we live up to the meaning of theſe words? let us conſider a little of it, and ſee the meaning of the words.

Firſt, We are to glorifie God in all our actions; that is, wee ought in the ſecret of our hearts to admire and adore him, to have high thoughts of him, and ſweet thoughts of him; and to expreſſe it fully, we ought to honour him as God, *Romans* 1. Which he blames the Gentiles for not doing, *That knowing him as God, did not honour him as God*: to honour him but as we would honor the holieſt man in the world, nay the higheſt Angel in Heaven, is nothing, and

as great derogation to his glory, as to give his glory to them; for to give the honour due unto God to a creature, and to give that that is due unto a creature unto God, are equally vitious: but let us deal freely and openly with our own souls, Do we do so much, as that which if we did no more we were guilty of that great sin of the Heathens, which the Apostle in the forenamed place doth condemne? do we honour God as much as we do honour an Angel, or an holy man? let us but ask our own consciences, and they wil tell us. Would we do that in the presence of either of them as we do in the presence of God; nay, of a child that is come to that understanding to distinguish between good and evill?

Secondly, By these words we are enjoyned that our words, actions, gestures, and all our carriages should be such, as may be sutable and fit to raise up those high thoughts of God in others, as we our selves have; for instance; in prayer we ought not only our selves to admire and adore our good and glorious God, but so to lift him up and hold forth his excellencies by our very expressions, pronounciations and gestures, that they may be such as not only may be sutable to our inward admirings of him, but fit to beget the same thoughts in all that hear us; our loves should be like a flame, that takes hold of all that comes near it.

Thirdly, We should, as much as in us lies, do all our actions, and speak all our words with an actu-

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all intention by them to edifie others, & to cause them to glorifie the Lord. Now, how far we come short of this, we may even be confounded with shame to speak of it.

The second place that sets down Christian perfection, is *Phil.* 3. 20. *We should have our conversation in Heaven*; we should think with our selves how we should live when we come thither, or how those live that are there, or one would live that should come from thence to live on earth again; how feelingly would they speak of God? how fervently would they praise him? how would their songs of praise be all flames of love? how are they continually taken up with thoughts of admiration of the excellencies of God, of the love of God? let us not daily with our selves or God,

but consider with our selves whether we live in any measure suitable to such a life. But to proceed, let us consider another place, *Eph.* 3.19. To say of such an one, that he is a godly man, the holy Spirit of God is in him, that he is ful of the Holy Ghost, that he is filled with all the fulnes of God: if one went upon such relations and expressions to see him of whom they were spoken, doubtlesse one should come with great expectations to meet with one that was wholly taken up with thoughts of God, and if one spake any thing to him of God, doubtles one would expect that he shoud speak wonderful things of God, with so much admiration, such zeal, such love, with such feelings, that his very word would be able to enflame our hearts with love of God; but

but if when one came to see such an one, he should entertain one with vain and idle jests, with discourses of the world, and spend the whole day generally in recreations, and sometime when he hath nothing else to do, go and spend half an hour in reading, or in praying; and when he comes from those duties (Iron wil be red hot if it be put into the fire for any time) speak as savourly and with as much delight of th. vanities of the world, as if he had spent his time not in prayer, but in admiring and gazing upon the beauty of the creature; and if one should speak to him somthing of God, he should answer one overly, would ye not think in your own souls, is this that holy man you spoke of? is he that man that was full of God? But to proceed a little fur-

ther, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18: the Apostle says of himself, and of Christians in his days, *that they were transformed into the Image of God*; that is, lived the life of God, such a life as Christ lived when he was here on earth; nay, the grace of God in them was in such an high degree, that it might be rather called glory then grace; they lived as if they were of the Church triumphant, in respect of holinesse, though of the Church militant, in respect of afflictions; their grace was of such an high degree, that it was more like glory, as was said before, then grace; yet they did not content themselves with that neither, but made a progresse from glory to glory: Dear Brethren, are our Saviours words but winde? and can we imagine that the lives of those that take upon them the names

names of Christians, are any whit sutable to these expressions? many times have I thought of that saying of *Erasmus*, That since men could not bring the world to Christianity, they have brought Christianity to the world; and those expressions and precepts that have been too strict to give us liberty to follow the vanities of the world, we have found out vain distinctions and expositions of the places, to make them signifie no more then we do, and to quiet our consciences, that they being deceived and laid a sleep, we might not be troubled with their clamours. Our Saviour says, *That for every idle word we must give an account at the last day*, Mat. 12.36. The words are so plain, that it will ask one a great deal of labour to find out such an exposition as

might not be a continuall accuſer of us in all companies, in all diſcourſes: our Saviours example is the beſt expoſition of this precept; we do not read in all the Scripture, one word that he ſpake, but was ſome way or other to edification; and yet how looſe are wee in our diſcourſes; as if there were no ſuch place of Scripture in the whole Bible as theſe words? ſurely, our time would be better ſpent in praying to God for ſtrength againſt our corruptions, then in ſtudying to finde out excuſes and intricate expoſitions of plaine places to juſtifie them. But you will ſay, that it is true, theſe are excellent things, if one could live ſo, it were a bleſſed life; but alas who can doe it?

I anſwer; Firſt, If thou ſayſt thou

thou canſt not live thus, I ask thee how doſt thou know? didſt thou ever try what might be done in this caſe? didſt thou ever make it thy buſineſſe? It may be thou haſt had ſome perfunctory and careleſſe deſires, ſome cold prayers and faint endeavours; but didſt thou ever ſet thy ſelf to it? didſt thou ever ſpend as much time, ſo many thoughts, with as much earneſtneſſe, to get acquaintance with God, as men in the world doe in their trades, to get a little thick clay? didſt thou ever pray with half that earneſtneſſe for grace, as ambitious men do ſue for places and preferments, or a condemned man for a pardon? Didſt thou ever ſeriouſly, and from the very bottom of thy heart and ſoul ſay, Well, by the

blessing of God I wil not speak an idle word, nor imploy my self in things that profit not: hast thou said with *David*? *I have sworn and I will perform thy righteous Judgments*, Psal. 119. 106. or as in the 20. or with the Apostle; *I fight not as one beating the ayr, but I press thorow towards the mark, and forget the things that are behind, &c.* So that if thou shalt say that one cannot live thus, I say again, there is no question, thou canst not live holily, doing no more then thou doest; neither the word of God, nor any one that knows the ways of God, ever said or thought that thou could'st upon these terms do any thing to purpose in the attainment of holiness: for our Saviour plainly says, *We must strive to enter in at the strait gate*; and, *that many shal seek*

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to enter in (with such seeking that comes not to the height of striving) *and shal not be able*: if thou shouldest bid thy servant lift such a piece of timber, and he should go with his little finger to lift it, and not being able, should tell thee, that he could not lift it: wouldest thou not think that he mocked thee, in stead of obeying thee? so when we shall complain of Religion, that it is too difficult a thing, we cannot attain it, and yet we will not so much as touch it scarce with one of our fingers; may not God justly say, that we do but mock him, and unjustly murmur against his commands, complaining of their difficulty, when we never tried, in using the meanes he hath appointed us, what might be done?

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Furthermore, Let us consider how far many of Gods servants, whose stories are recorded in the sacred Scriptures, have gon in this way of perfection; it is said, *that Enoch walked with God*, and *that Noah was perfect in his generations, and walked with God*. Can we possibly think that these Expressions import no more then that sometimes when they had little or nothing else to do, they spent their time in prayer and meditation of divine matters? or that they did no more then usually men do, in the morning spend some small time in prayer, and then take their leave of God all the day, as it were compounding with God for two or three prayers a day? but doth it not much rather import a sweet, constant, and strict communion with God? for

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doubtleſſe *Enoch* found ſo much ſweetneſſe in his walk with God, that he could not be content with that communion that earth could afford him. And of all the Patriarks before the Flood, we read of none that lived ſo few years upon earth as *Enoch* did; and doubtleſſe thoſe years which he did live were more tedious to him, to be ſo long abſent from the full fruition of God, then if he had lived ten times as long and had not taſted of thoſe joyes, in compariſon of which the pleaſures of this world are but as the gall of Aſpes. What thinke we of *Abraham*, *Moſes*, *David* and *Daniel*? with how much faith, zeal, meekneſſe, holineſſe, breathings after God did they live? What high expreſ-

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ſions of joy, love, and heavenly deſires are there in the Pſalms? What, doe we think all theſe holy Examples are ſet down in the Scripture to find us matter of diſcourſe? or that the wiſedome of God ſet down an Idæa of holineſſe, as *Plato* hath done of a Common-wealth? or were they not ſet down for our imitation? thouſands of expreſſions almoſt in the Pſalmes we muſt make ſtrange Hyperboles, and ſay, they were but Davids Rhetorick; or elſe we muſt needs acknowledge that he was a Gyant in compari- of us in ſpirituall matters. O what heavenly ſpirituall frame of heart had he! ſurely his righteouſneſſe in compariſon of Chriſts was but as filthy rags, but in reſpect of ours a glorious robe: and now I pray, what reaſon

reason is there in the world, why we might not live as holily as they, but that we take it for granted, we cannot, and so never strive; 'tis true, to think our selves holier then the meanest Saint, is pride, but not to strive to be as holy as the highest Saint is sin: what means had they to attaine holinesse that we have not? They had prayer, meditation, reading, hearing; so have we: if their prayers and meditations were more fervent, and more heavenly, who must we blame, God is not a barren wildernesse unto us, and his grace is as sufficient for us, as for them; they had Circumcision, and the Passeover; the brests of the new Testament are as full of graces as those of the old; nay doubtlesse, in respect of meanes they

they are farre more abundantly glorious in our dayes then in theirs, in reſpect of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and the myſteries of ſalvation: may we not ſay as our Saviour does, that of all that was born of Women, there was none like *John the Baptiſt*, and yet the leaſt in the times of the Goſpel, is, or may be greater then he? and what enemies or hinderances have we that they had not? Was Satan, the fleſh, the world, all or either of theſe not their enemies as much as ours? or had they better weapons and armour to fight againſt them then we have? we have the armour of God, they could have no better; if you ſhall ſay, you had a great family to provide for, weighty affaires and imployments lay upon you, and

and these are great hinderances: in all these they exceed thee, and yet they were no hinderances to them in comparison of that, generally they are to us; *Abraham* drew three hundred out of his family to deliver *Lot*, besides what men, women, and children were left behinde. *Job* had also a great family, he was a Judge, and a Prince, and yet notwithstanding in all the whole world there was none like unto him. So *David* had a whole Kingdome to look to, besides continuall wars, and yet how often did he pray, every day; how frequent was he in meditation? without all question, did we make it our business to intreat the Lord for strength & grace to serve him, were we frequent & fervent enough in such

such desires, did we seek for wisdome as for silver, and search for understanding as for hid treasures, we might do wonders in religion, in comparison of what we do. And if you shall say, that all these you speake of are Prophets. I answer, what then? for the gifts of prophecy are not gifts of sanctification, but of edification; they might have been as holy, and not have been Prophets, and they might have propheſied, and yet been workers of iniquity. But to returne to what we spake, surely if men had faith, and that wrought by love as it should do; if we were as watchfull over our wayes as wee might be, if we were not wanting to our selves, and to God, (for he is not wanting unto us) we might live many

many days, without doing or ſpeaking any thing that materially is a ſin: I do aſſuredly know, that no one thought, word, or action, but in ſome reſpect or other is ſinful, either the ground is not ſpirituall; or not ſo ſpirituall; the end is not heavenly, or not ſo heavenly; we do not purely aim at the glory of God, nor purely do it out of obedience to God, and in the name of Chriſt, &c. as wee ſhould; therfore I do not ſay, we can live one minute without ſinning againſt God; but one may live many hours and dayes without doing ſuch actions which materially and in their own nature are ſins: as now for thoſe which are accounted groſſe ſinnes in the world, and are ſo, as adultery, murder, theft, blaſphemy, ſwear-

ſwearing; it may be ſome of Gods people live their whole life without actually committing any one of them. What is meant by that that is ſaid of *Zachary* and *Elizabeth, that they lived blameleſſe*, Luke 1. 6. And what is meant by that of St *Paul*, 1 Cor. 4. 4. *That he knew nothing by himſelf*? well, certainly thoſe that love not to keep a ſtrict communion with God, and love not the truth, may finde excuſes enough to bolſter themſelves up in their careleſſe walke; nay, let them take heed, leaſt they ſo provoke the Lord, that he ſends them ſtrong deluſions to beleeve lies. It may be, they will plead the infirmities and falls of the Saints, *Noahs* drunkenneſſe, *Davids* adultery, *Peters* deniall, and ſo encou-

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rage themselves in their owne wickednesse; surely these failings of the Saints are set downe as sands and rocks to avoyd, not as our Compasse whereby we should steer our course: 'tis true, if after prayers and strivings against those sins, through the strength of our corruptions we fall into some sin, we may take comfort from the infirmity and failings of the Saints: but before our fall, what use have we of such failings, but onely rocks, as I have said: comforts they may be after, but not encouragements before; otherwise our spots are not the spots of Gods people.

2. *Consid.* The second Consideration is, that no art, science, or trade whatsoever, is attained without some yeares being Apprentice,

tice, or ſtudying of it; and can we imagine that we can attain to any meaſure of perfection in Religion, without ſpending either time or thoughts about it, but making it a thing meerly by the bie? The unreaſonableneſſe of this conceit appears the more, if we conſider, that wee have no ſuch impediments to hinder us from the attainment of excellencies in Trades, Arts, and Sciences; nay, thoſe things that are hinderances in the attainment of holineſſe, do further us in the attainment of ſuch kind of excellencies: to be an excellent workman in any trade, or to be an excellent Phyſician, neither the world, nor our corruptions, nor Satan are againſt it; the World generally doth promote and imploy ſuch perſons; when they

they have an occasion to use any one of any trade or calling, they use the skilfullest, and so they are an encouragement to them: and for our corruptions, they do not hinder, but rather further, for wee pride our selves generally in such kind of excellencies: and if the World nor the Flesh be not, certainly Satan is not against them neither; but against holinesse they are all enemies. Now if we should see a man rowing, having both wind and tide with him, and should row with all his might, and yet with much adoe come to such a place by night, and the next day being to row back again against winde and tide, should take no pains at all, but lie sleeping in the boat, as if the streame that was against him, should

ſhould carry him back of it ſelf, wee ſhould much wonder at ſuch a mans folly. Much more then may we wonder, when men ſhall ſpend ſo much pains, ſo many thoughts to get an eſtate; and in things concerning God and eternity, ſhould carry themſelves as if they were either not worth having, or as if holineſſe (like weeds) ſhould grow of it ſelf.

3. *Conſid.* The third Conſideration is, That there is no pain nor trouble in it's ſelf in Religion, nor no true pleaſure nor profit in ſin; or what pleaſure or pain ſoever there is in them, it is ſo ſhort and ſo ſmall, that it deſerves not the name of either: Do but truly and ſeriouſly conſider, what pain or trouble is there in ſpending an hour

hour, in reading, meditating, or praying, I speak to the most disadvantage; for indeed, one should rather say, what wonderfull delight there is in a strict and constant communion with God in such duties: but let it be supposed it be troublesome, the trouble is nothing, but the comfort and the benefit is exceeding great; when thou hast spent a day in humbling thy soul before God, I pray, next day, is it any pain or trouble to you? in respect of them, it is as the way of a Serpent upon a stone, there is nothing of the trouble that did accompany those holy duties doth remain when they are ended, but the comfort and profit of them thou maist meet withall twenty years hence: and so for sin, the pleasure of it is momentany,

but the guilt and ſting of it is eternall; the poor empty pleaſures of ſinne, what are they while they do continue? but ſure I am, they are bitterneſſe at the laſt. To have a guilty conſcience, and a wounded ſpirit, but one hour in any extremity, as poor ſouls in deſertion or deſpair have, hath ſo much horrour in it, that doubtleſſe whoſoever hath had any experience in ſuch things, would not endure them for all the pleaſures in the world for *Methuſalems* age: But alas, we look not afar off, conſider neither the end of holineſſe, nor of ſin; nay to ſpeak the truth, we conſider not the eſſentiall excellency of the one, nor filthineſſe of the other.

4. *Conſid.* Fourthly, Conſider that there is not the leaſt ſin, nor the

the least holy thought that shall vanish into aire, or into nothing; for if God shal call us to account for every idle thought or word, shall not every holy thought or word, through his mercy, tend to our good also? The wicked do treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; as a man that should cast in every day many pieces of silver and gold into a room for twenty years together, or more, when he should come to look in that room at the twenty years end, he would finde many a piece which he had forgotten; so it is with one that treasures up sin, when the book of conscience shall be opened at the last day, and the bagge wherein God sealed up his sins, as *Job* speaks, how many sins will he meet withall that he

never thought of, untill that day? not one of them ſhall be loſt that ever he caſt in: ſo ſurely it will be with thee that treaſureſt up prayers and holy thoughts; God doth as ſafely ſeale up them, as he doth the ſins of the wicked: there is a book of remembrance writ of all thy good words, and there is a bottle to bottle up all thy teares: now how eaſie is it for thee to caſt into this treaſury a thouſand holy thoughts a day? to what a numberleſſe number would they ariſe to in few years? and by theſe not any buſineſſe is hindred; thou mayeſt ride, thou mayeſt eat and drink, thou mayeſt ſell and buy, thou mayeſt walk for all them: now if every holy thought do adde ſomething to thy grace here,

here, and to thy glory hereafter, and ſince they do not hinder, but ſweeten and ſanctifie all imployments, why doeſt thou not treaſure up theſe againſt the day of the Lord?

5. *Conſid.* Fifthly, Conſider ſeriouſly the excellencies of the Scriptures; for we are not ſenſible enough of their worth, nor do we firmly nor feelingly enough believe that they are the Word of God: Suppoſe that by ſome infallible arguments it might be demonſtrated that there were a Prophet now in *England*, with what extraordinary care and obſervation would you obſerve his words that he ſpake in the Name of the Lord: if when thou wer pouring out thy ſoul before God, humbly begging of him that he would diſcover to thee

more the things that belong to thy peace, and thou ſhouldeſt have an Angel from Heaven coming unto thee, as one did to *Cornelius*; or that our Saviour ſhould himſelfe ſpeak to thee from Heaven, as he did to *Paul*, when thou ſhalt ſay as he did; *Lord, what would'ſt thou have me to do?* With what reverence and attention would'ſt thou obſerve, and what obedience to a tittle would'ſt thou give to ſuch Meſſages? Wouldeſt thou not mark every word, and every ſyllable? and wouldeſt not vary from them one jot. Well, thou ſhouldeſt give no leſſe reverence nor obedience unto the Word of God, then unto them. If thy friend ſpeaks to thee, or writes to thee, ſo thou art ſure that it is his hand,

hand, they are both of equal authority with thee; and why ſhould not the word of God immediately ſpoken from Heaven, or written, be ſo too, of equall authority with thee? to have an Angel from heaven to tel thee what thou ſhould'ſt do, is a ſtronger temptation to pride; but there is no more of reality in it to move thee to obedience, then there is in the written word: nay, may I not ſay leſſe? for the word of God is the rule by which we muſt judg their Meſſages; and not their Meſſages the rule by which we muſt judg the Word of God; for if an Angel from Heaven ſhould preach another doctrine, let him be accurſed. Now there is no reaſon, thou believing the Bible to be the Word of God, which

we all profeſſe, but thou ſhouldeſt with as much care endeavour to underſtand and practiſe what therein is written. If wee will do but as *Luther* did, that hee might underſtand *Rom.* 3. 25, 26. faſt and pray when wee finde any place of Scripture too difficult to be underſtood; or when we found our corruptions ſo ſtrong, that wee obeyed not when it is underſtood: If wee ſought the Lord by prayer and faſting (a duty generally neglected, and by ſome condemned, though by the Apoſtles commended and practiſed) ſurely, wee ſhould both underſtand more of the minde of God, and live more ſutable to what wee know.

6. *Conſiderat.* Sixthly, Conſider, that howſoever we eſteem it,

it, it matters not, without queſtion the enjoyment of God is infinite happineſſe: for, doe but truly and really conſider wherein doth the happineſſe of Angels conſiſt; Doth it not conſiſt in the viſion, fruition, and union with God? Is not God their all? and ſhall he not be ours when we come thither? How comes it to paſſe, that it is not ſo now? Nay, it is ſo; but how comes it to paſſe, that it is not ſo to us? Either the Angels are deceived in making of it their happineſſe, or wee muſt be deceived in not making of it ours: we cannot have the face to ſay, That if the Angels knew what pleaſure there were in eating and drinking, and other vain and wicked pleaſures of the word, they would never ſpend

their eternity in singing the praises, in beholding the face, and admiring the excellency of God; yet though we are assumed to say thus, yet by our lives we generally hold forth this blasphemy, and proclaime it to the whole world; nay, let me raise this one step higher, the blessednesse of God wherein doth it consist? the creature is not his happinesse, but himselfe; and if God be enough for himselfe, shall he not be enough for thee? oh dust and ashes, his enjoyment of himself, is his happinesse; how comes it to passe that it is not thine? God doth command, invite thee, entreat thee to enjoy him; nay, indeed what is it that God requires of thee, but this, even to admire, love and enjoy him in the secret of thy soul?

thou

thou wilt not, thou preferrest every trifle before him; thou wilt go and see a carnall friend for carnall ends, rather then spend thy time in the enjoyment of him, who is the praise, and above the praise of men and Angels to all eternity; pray to him, who onely can discover his love and excellencies to thee, that he would make thee taste of this hidden Manna; that he would draw away the vail before thine eyes, that thou mayst be no longer ignorant of this truth; that he would purge out those corruptions out of thy heart, that thou mayst relish and experiment the sweetnesse of it.

7. *Consid.* Seventhly, Consider that we have three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the Divell;

Divel; Consider this, I say, fully and feelingly; for few there are that live so much as a tittle of this truth: or who lives as if the World was his implacable enemie? for, do we not generally into all our actions put something of that poysonous ingredient, *viz.* a desire to please men, and to get their good word and will? Wee ought not to scandalize any one, as much as in us lies; we ought to be all things to all men; but it is that we may gain them to God, not to our selves: If this truth was ingraven on our hearts, That it is as possible to go to heaven and please the Divel, as go to heaven and please the world: I say, if we were fully perswaded in our hearts of that Truth, we would neither wonder the World hates

us,

us, nor endeavour that it ſhould love us: we ſhould not endeavour nor caſt away our pains to do that which is abſolutely impoſſible: So then, if we reſolve to be Chriſtians, wee muſt neither fear nor care what the World can ſay of, or do unto us. And we ſhould in all our actions of Religion, not ſo much as once bring it into our conſideration, to think what men will ſay or do unto us, if we do ſo or ſo, except it be by their diſlike to help our ſelves to know what is right; for though it is not an abſolute rule, yet it is a generall rule, that ſuch a thing is right, becauſe men generally ſpeak againſt it: certainly, our deſires and endeavours to pleaſe men, is one of the greateſt ſnares in the world; for generally we

live so that we enslave our selves, and lose not only our Christian, but our naturall liberty for men; but indeed if it was no more but our outward liberty, it was nothing, but we wound our consciences and offend our God, which is worth more then a thousand Heavens.

Cautions.

1. *Caut.* First, Take heed of the perfunctory performance of holy duties; for many mischiefs come by them.

First, They puffe up, not edifie; if thou powrest out thy soule before God in prayer, feelingly, spiritually, and faithfully, thou never departest without some spirituall profit; but if thou dost it carnally and formally, thy prayers are but wind, and

and they puffe thee up; for thy carnall heart would plead these carnall performances to thy conscience, and make thee beleeve, because thou hast many pieces of this counterfeit coyne, that thou art rich and wantest nothing, though thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable; for thy duties have not the right stamp, having neither the image nor superscription of God upon them, being neither performed for the glory of God, nor by the Spirit of God, nor in the name of Christ: and between carnall and spirituall duties, this is the difference, that we usually pride our selves in the one, and are humble by the other.

Secondly, Which followes upon the former, we shall grow

grow weary in time of performing carnal duties; for needs must we be weary of these things from which we get no profit nor strength: when duties are dry brests unto us, it is no marvel if we are weary of drawing them; by spirituall duties we get strength; and such prayers do enable us to pray more; but carnall prayers tire us.

Thirdly, Consider the same time is spent in the one as in the other, whether thou heareſt or prayeſt with zeal and attention, or without, it takes up the same time in the Publick Congregation, though not the same profit.

Fourthly, Consider that you spoyle both, by mixing the thoughts of worldly busineſſe with spirituall duties; for thy outward

ward performance of the duty keeps thy thoughts of buſineſſe from coming to maturity, and the thoughts of worldly things keep thy prayers from doing thee any good, ſo that they ſpoil one another; I mean, of thoſe wandering thoughts that we let lie in our duties, for thoſe that are reſiſted, and removed, and mourned for, do ſomwhat hinder, but not putrifie the duty; for as the Wiſe man ſaith, *That dead flyes cauſe the oyntment of the Apothecary to ſend forth a ſtinking ſavour*; if one takes out a fly as ſoon as it is come into it, ſo much of the oyntment that ſticks about the fly is loſt, but the reſt remains ſweet and pure, as it was before: ſo wandering thoughts ſpoyle ſomething of our prayers, though they be reſiſted and remo-

removed, they make a little hole in our prayer, by taking up that time which ſhould have beene fill'd up with better thoughts; but if they continue, they eat up the fat of thoſe ſacrifices, and make the ſweet odours of our prayers noiſome. But to conclude this Caution, if we were but in any meaſure ſenſible of the Majeſty of him to whom, and the neceſſity of thoſe things for which we pray, (to inſtance in that duty) for they are our life, and of the neceſſity of having them from God; we need no other motives to deterre us from perfunctory performances.

2. *Caut.* Secondly, Take heed of worldly company, for whoſoever delights in that, will find that he never comes out of it but worſe then he comes into it; for

for when one goes into such a company among whom there is nothing spoken of God, of Christ, or of the Spirit of the Word of God, and of spirituall experiences, where there is no spirituall duty performed; except one be exceeding carefull to sequester ones mind from their discourses, and keepe a strict communion with God in the secrets of our hearts, our graces, if they were strong, would grow weak; and our corruptions, though they were weak, would grow strong, and that spirituall advantage which you have got by many prayers, you will find will be lost in a little time spent in such company, except their discourses be as dry brests unto you, and as *Meshech* and *Kedar* were unto *David*; they must either be

be a grief or ſin unto them, except in ſome caſes, as in caſe of buſineſſe, thy particular calling, or charity, if thou comeſt as a Phyſician, either of their bodies or of their ſouls, then thou not only mayſt, but oughteſt to come unto them; in ſuch caſes, our Saviour did frequently eat with Publicans and ſinners, not out of any love he had to their worldly converſation, but to their converſion; and this muſt be taken as a rule, He that knows not how to be alone, knows not how to be in company with profit.

3 *Caut.* Thirdly, Take heed of idleneſs; for as the Wiſe man ſays, *Seeſt thou one wiſe in his own eyes, there is more hope of a fool then of him.* For to make ſuch a man wiſe, there are two things to be done.

Firſt,

First, You must bring him to that, that he may know himself to be ignorant, and then you must teach him wisdom; wheras he that is ignorant and knows himself to be so, needs only the last; so he that is in any honest employment, Satan hath two works to do to make him sin.

First, He must get him to leave off what he is doing, and then perswade him to the evill that he tempts him to: as a bowle that is running must be first stopped, before it can be made to run the contrary way; whereas the bowle that lies still may without stopping be cast what way one pleases: a bird that is flying one can hardly take any aime at, as one may at that which sits still; so Satan cannot levell his temptations so at a busie,

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as at an idle man: but I ſhall not proſecute this common place of idleneſſe, but my main deſigne is to give you caution againſt ſpirituall idleneſſe; for that which is not taken notice enough of, that is not avoided nor mourned for enough, is that we think that we are not idle, if we are buſied in worldly imployments, if we are ſelling of wares in our ſhops, or riding of a journey, or buſied in ſome ſuch imployment of our particular calling. The man threſheth and plowes all day, and thinks that he is free from idleneſſe; but we ſhould know, that if our thoughts are not imployed upon ſpirituall things when they may, it is the worſt idleneſs of all: and very few worldly buſineſſes there are that ſtand in need of the continuall

tinuall intentions of our thoughts upon them; for it is rather our love of the world that fixeth our thoughts upon worldly matters while we are imployed about them, then because they might not be done without halfe that intention of mind: doubtlesse, there are many *disseminata vacua*, in all imployments of the world, which might and ought to be filled up with spirituall thoughts; and as it is with Bees, though they gather honey from a flower, they leave it as fragrant and as fresh as they found it; so we gathering and mixing spirituall thoughts with and from our worldly businesse, we hinder it not at all; for as a vessel that is full of sand will hold almost as much water as if there were no sand in it; so when we

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are full of imployments, we may hold a thousand holy thoughts; and as a ship can hardly be so fild with chests or other lading, but there will be so many corners unfild up, wherein Diamonds of such great value might be put in, that they would be more worth then all the lading of the Ship; so those thoughts of God and spirituall things which we might have in the midst of our other employments, may be of farre greater value then they.

Fourthly, Take heed of perfunctory and careless resisting of temptations; but what thou dost in that particular, as in spirituall things, do it with all thy might; for to think and weakly to resolve against sin, will not hinder, but

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aggravate thine offence; and it is one of the Divels policies, to let a man alone to thinke of severall Motives, and make some faint resolutions against any sin, when hee sees that hee hath him fast enough; for he knows, that the more Motives and Resolutions wee sin against, the more wee are hardened, and GOD is provoked: And as it is with a Town that is besieged, they will willingly let so many of their enemies in, as they know they are able to master: so Satan, when hee sees that the Motives and Resolutions that enter into the soul are too weak, hee willingly suffers them to enter; for, perfunctory performance of duties, and feeble resisting of temptations are equally dangerous, if the later be not

the worſt; by the former we get no ſpirituall good, and by the later we overcome no ſpirituall evill.

3. *Caut.* Take heed of making others ſin, either by ſcandall, or being a temptation to them by example or provocation; it is a good way, when one hath to deal with a paſſionate man, not onely to prepare our ſelves for the Combate by prayer and reſolutions and keeping a ſtrong guard upon our hearts, that we may not be overcome with paſſion, howſoever he ſhall uſe us, either in word or in deed; but to take ſpecial care and to uſe all means to keep him from paſſion; for there is a wretched joy that our hearts are ſubject to take in the ſins of others, thinking them to be

a foil to our innocency, to have others very passionate when we are very meek; there is a secret delight that the heart is prone to take, but it proceeds from a desperate pride in us, who desire to have our excellencies made manifest, though with the dishonour of God and damnation of our brother; but there is a great deal of hell in it, and charity rejoyceth not in ill. 1 *Cor.* 13.

6. *Caut.* Take heed of studying high speculative points whatsoever; for when our thoughts are exceedingly intent in finding out truths, all the fire is in the top of the chimney, and none is left upon the hearth: generally high speculations leave the heart cold without devotion; for generally there is a great deal of curiosity and

pride in such studies, for commonly we desire to be accounted knowing men, in searching into whys and hows of Gods works and truths; as why God made the tree of knowledg of good and evill, and how there can be three persons, and but one God: therefore in all reading, joyn prayer, whether it be in the reading of humane or divine things, and take speciall care that the love of God go not out, nor grow cold in you. That which I have heard of one, is a good practice, that whatsoever book he was reading, every leafe that he turned over he would look what was become of his heart, and of God, and would not begin till he had sent up some prayers to the Lord for direction.

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Adviſes.

1. *Adv.* Firſt, Concerning writing, many wayes thou art to employ that for thy advantage.

Firſt, Write down all thoſe ſpiritual paſſages out of Sermons, books, diſcourſes, wherin thou haſt found moſt reliſh and ſpirituall profit.

Secondly, Keep a Regiſter of all the mercies that God hath beſtowed upon thee, whether it be temporall or ſpiritual, but eſpecially thy ſpirituall experiences, and his manifeſtations of his love, if ever the terrors of the Almighty was upon thee; the wayes of Gods providence in ſupporting thee, and how, and when, and in what manner he delivered thee.

And so for the discoveries of his love, and concerning the mercies God hath bestowed upon thee, how, and whether, and when he answers your prayers; as also all the speciall ways of Gods providence to other spirituall persons, in temporalls or spirituals; and when thou findest thy heart dull and cold in love, or weak in faith, these experiences of Gods goodnesse to thy selfe and others, will be an excellent means to enflame and strengthen thee.

Lastly, Keepe a Diurnall of thy life in respect of the spirituall passages of every day; set downe whether thou didst awake with God, or whether the world had the first fruits of thy thoughts, and how thou didst performe spirituall duties, whe-

whether with relish, fervency, or delights, or otherwise; mark and set down when thy heart made any default, intermitting its communion with God, and all the severall sins that thou canst take notice of, that thou hast committed that day, and what mercies thou hast received; and when there is any mercy that thou prayest for, some marke should be set untill thou hast an answer of that prayer from God, and that day the Lord gives thee that answer, make a reference from that day to the day of praying for that mercy.

2. *Adv.* Secondly, Choose some spirituall friend one or more, to whom thou mayst wholly unbosome thy self in all spiritual matters; but a great deal of caution

need to be had in this particular, he need to be one of a 1000 that thou chooſeſt; thus thou needeſt have a gr at deal of Experince of his ſpirituall wiſedome, humility, and experience of the ways of God; for be he never ſo learned, though he underſtand all myſteries and all knowledge, though he hath never ſuch excellent gifts of edification, yet if he be not an experienced Chriſtian, thou wilt little benefit either by his ſociety, or counſell; for when he ſpeaks of ſpirituall and experimentall truths, and the diſcourſes of ſuch truths are the very life of the communion of Saints; I ſay, that his diſcourſes concerning ſuch matters, be he never ſo learned, if he be not experienced in them, will be without life or reliſh; he will ſeldom

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ſpeak of ſuch things, but when he does it, it will be with ſo much heavineſs, that thou mayſt cleerly perceive he doth ſpeak but by rote, and of things he delights not in; and for his adviſe in ſpirituall matters, it muſt needs be very imperfect, for thouſand caſes may happen of which books ſpeak nothing; and having no other way to underſtand them, and direct thee, he will be at a loſſe; as one that travels by a Map, and hath no other way to guide himſelfe, he will meet with many turnings, that put him to a non-plus which way to take; whereas he that hath often travelled that way is a farr ſafer guide: the truth is, we have no knowledge of God, or no ſaving knowledge of him, but what is by experience: To con-

need to be had in this particular, he need to be one of a 1000 that thou chooſeſt; thus thou needeſt have a gr at deal of Experince of his ſpirituall wiſedome, humility, and experience of the ways of God; for be he never ſo learned, though he underſtand all myſteries and all knowledge, though he hath never ſuch excellent gifts of edification, yet if he be not an experienced Chriſtian, thou wilt little benefit either by his ſociety, or counſell; for when he ſpeaks of ſpirituall and experimentall truths, and the diſcourſes of ſuch truths are the very life of the communion of Saints; I ſay, that his diſcourſes concerning ſuch matters, be he never ſo learned, if he be not experienced in them, will be without life or reliſh; he will ſeldom

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clude therefore, if thou wilt choose a spiritual friend, choose such an one as magnifies Christ, and the spirit of God, and his teachings, and the word of God, and inward mortifications above outward, and that is an experienced wise and humble Christian, and thou shalt get a world of good by the converse of such an one; for in doubts his wisdom and experience wil direct thee, in thy distresses hee will comfort thee when thou art spiritually cold, his example and carriage in the performance of holy duties, his discourses of heavenly things, and the flames of his love wil set thee on fire.

3. *Adv.* The third is diurnal examination, every night strictly to examine what thou hast done that day; we read of God him-

himselfe that every day he looked over his works: surely God hath no need to examine his works, but it is writ for our instruction, and doubtlesse the benefit and necessity of this examination are very great.

First, We should find out our sins before they come to be customary, when they are but a day old, and before they have taken root in us, and so they will easily be pull'd up, and by faith, repentance, prayer, and resolutions against them, we shall easily get the victory over them, and through the help of God, who makes us more then conquerours: it is very likely, by the blessing of God, if *David* had not neglected the examining of his soul that day when he defiled *Bathsheba*, he would have discovered

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that abomination, and he would never have gone so farre as to have added bloud and the rest of his abominations to his uncleanesse, and he would have watered his couch with his teares, which he had defiled with his adultery.

The second advantage is, that we shall never lie in any sin unrepented of; and there be many other inconveniences (besides bringing it to a custome) that come by sin lying on our souls unrepented of; for it deads our prayers, cools our love, hardens our heart, makes us that we cannot come to God with that joy, with that freedome of spirit; as when one hath done ones friend an injury, one is loth to see him.

The third advantage is by dividing

ding this great work of giving up our account, and making all even betwixt God and our ſelves, the work will be very eaſie; which if we ſhall not doe it but at our death, or only yearly, it would be exceeding difficult, and almoſt impoſſible: as if ſome Merchant who had very great trading, ſhould ballaſt his accounts of debts, receipts, of diſburſements, &c. but once in ſeven years, it would be an intollerable burden; beſides, many things would be forgotten; whereas it being done daily, his accounts are perfected with more eaſe, and fewer defaults.

The fourth advantage is, that at thy death thou wilt have a world of comfort by taking this courſe; for beſides, thou art eaſed of that burthen of having

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all the accounts of thy life to make up then, thou hast a clear way to answer Satan, when he shall lay to thy charge any sins of thy former life; for if he shall accuse thee, and say, do'st not thou remember, that such a year, and such a day, thou didst commit such a sin? thou mayest answer him, and say, it is true, that such a day I did commit such a sin, but then that very night I mourned for it, and went not to bed before I had my pardon sealed with the bloud of Christ to my soul; and when Satan shall not be able to lay to thy charge any debt of which thou hast not had an acquittance, nor any sin for which thou hast not had a pardon from the Lord, such fiery darts will have no power to wound thee: and this examination

tion thou mayest make thus: Consider all the severall hours of the day, and how thou hast spent them; when thou didst first awake, what didst thou think of? when thou wert asleep, and thoughtest not of thy selfe, God thought on thee, and thou wert safe under the shadow of his wings; *When I awake, thou art with me*, sayes *David*; was not God with *David* when he was asleep? yes surely; for his being with him when he was awake, shewed that he was there before; for it is not said, *When I awake thou comest to me*, but *art with me*. Well, but what are thy thoughts when thou first wakest? are they of God, or of the World? Thou shalt much discover the temper of thy heart by this; those that are our very fami-

familiar acquaintance, we ſuffer them to come into our chamber before we are up: ſurely, God is a ſtranger to thee, if thou thinkeſt not of him, nor ſeekeſt him on thy bed; then as the Apoſtle ſayes, *If the firſt fruits are holy, the whole lump is holy*: ſo generally, as thy firſt thoughts are, ſuch art thou all the day after: in the morning thou ſayeſt, *it will be foule weather*, ſayes our Saviour, *for the ſkie is red and lowring*; ſo we may ſay of the day in reſpect of ſpiritnall matters; if thy morning thoughts be red and lowring, it will be foule weather in thy ſoule that day: and when thou readeſt over thy diary, thou ſhalt finde that thoſe dayes when that thy waking and morning thoughts were full

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of God, that all the duties of that day, whether of thy generall or particulat calling, were full of God also. Well, what didst thou think of afterwards, didst thou keep thy thoughts close to God, untill thy morning exercise? didst thou dresse thy soul, as thou didst dresse thy body? Well, after that, what didst thou doe such an hour and such and hour, &c? Or to help thee in this duty something more, examine at night thy works, words, thoughts, what they were every houre of the day. For thy works, consider what thy religious works, the works of thy particular calling, and thy recreations were. For thy prayers, hast thou not omitted thy seven times a day, if thou hast attained with *David* to that number?

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or how often soever thy set times are, hast thou not omitted them? for I dare not discourage any one in observing set times, as if that could not be don lawfully. Wel, how hast thou prayed? hast thou performed that duty as a task, or as a means? hast thou bound up thy devotion to such a number of times of going to God? or hast thou given God those prayers as a composition, or as the rent of the day, that thou mayest do with the rest, and spend the rest in vanity, as thou pleasest? Or didst thou not much rather perform that duty of prayer as an act of communion with God for the present, and as an help for communion with God for the future? Didst thou not by thy prayers intend and desire of the Lord power and strength not to depart

depart from him? What were thy prayers? were they faithfull, fervent, reverent, humble? What returns of thy prayers haſt thou had this day? Haſt thou endeavoured to obtain thoſe mercies and graces that thou prayedſt for? Thou mockeſt God, to pray for thoſe things thou endeavoureſt not for; and thou mockeſt thy ſelf, to endeavour for thoſe things thou prayeſt not for. For thy Meditation and reading the Word of God, how haſt thou performed them? What power have they had upon thy heart this day? Haſt thou been more faithfull, humble, charitable, &c? What reſolutions didſt thou make? and how haſt thou kept them? &c. Concerning thy reading the Scriptures and meditation,

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moſt of the things which are ſpoken concerning Prayer, may be applyed to theſe alſo: as, Didſt thou meditate and read as a task, or as a means? and ſo of the reſt. Concerning the works of thy particular calling, have they not juſtled out the works of thy generall calling? haſt thou not unneceſſarily omitted thy ſet times for ſpirituall duties? or have not thy thoughts been taken up too much with them? haſt thou not left off thy communion with God? God may be with thee in thy ſhop as well as in thy Cloſet. Againe, if thou art a tradeſman, haſt thou not took advantage of the neceſſity of the ſeller, and bought too cheape, and of the ignorance of the buyer, and ſold two dear? haſt thou not ſold thy conſcience

science with thy wares? Concerning thy recreations, have they not been unlawfull recreations in respect of the kinde? hast thou not made a sport of sin, making that a recreation which should be thy grief? making that thy delight, which should make a Christian weep? have not thy recreations been unlawfull in respect of time? have they not been unseasonable? hast thou not used recreations, when thou shouldest have put on sackcloth, not being sensible of the afflictions of *Joseph?* or have not thy recreations taken up too much time? hast thou not made a vocation of recreation? the best way is by prayer and by frequent communion with God, to attain to that spirituall frame

of

of soul, that thou mayest go to God as *David* speaks, *Psalm* 43. ver. 4. to make God *thy exceeding joy*: so shall thy great businesse and designe that thou hast in the whole world be turned into a recreation; and thou shalt need no other, but thou shalt be as those that are in heaven; it shall be thy eternall businesse and delight to admire and praise God. What have thy words been? thou must give an account at the last day for every idle word: how many hast thou spoken this day? Where, when, and with whom hast thou discoursed, and what hath thy discourse been of? Have thy words been to edification? Remember what the Apostle says, That *we must avoyd foolish talking and jesting, which is not* conveni-

convenient; Hast thou not this day slandered, or spoken ill of thy neighbour? if thou hast, besides thy humbling thy selfe before God, and asking pardon of him, make some recompence to thy neighbour, and put up as many prayers to God for him, as thou hast spoken evill words of him. For thy thoughts, what have they been? Have not vain thoughts lodged in thee? The fountain of all sinne are our thoughts; if thou keepest them close to God, all the rest will follow, thy words and thy conversation will be spirituall also: Hast thou not had a thousand thoughts of God this day? if thou hast not, thou hast lost that which is irrevocable; for though thou hast a thousand thoughts of God the next day,

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thy losse this day is not thereby recovered; for thy having a thousand thoughts of God this day, doth not hinder thee from having a thousand thoughts next day, but rather further thee; the more thoughts thou hast of God, the more thou mayst have; and for thy thoughts of God, what have they been? have they been fervent as well as frequent? have thy thoughts of God been worthy of God? or have not thy thoughts of God been such that thou shouldest have had of the world, and thoughts of the world such as thou shouldest have had of God?

4. *Adv.* The fourth is Meditation, a duty of so great concernment, so much profit, that nothing but experience can

can make one know the benefit of it; and the man of the greatest devotion, and of the heavenlyest affections, that we read of in all the Bible, though indeed, for matter of revelations, it may be, something more is spoken of others then of him, I mean *David*, was exceedingly versed in Meditation, and doth speak very much of it concerning his own practise, and commending it to others: you know very well, that he sets it down as the only, or at least the chief exercise of the blessed man, *to meditate in the word of God day and night*: he delights in the word of God, and therefore meditates in it; and meditates in it, and therfore delights in it: One that walks in a garden, sees the beauty, and may smell sweetnesse of the flowers growing

there; but it is the Bee that gathers honey out of them: to read and ſtudy the Scriptures, hath a great deal of ſweetneſſe in it, but it is meditating on the Scriptures that brings the ſweeteſt and laſtingeſt benefit: the end of ſtudy is knowledge; but the end of meditation is alſo holy affection and practice. Now that which I adviſe and direct in this particular, is, to know how to read and meditate on the holy Scriptures to our greateſt ſpirituall comfort and advantage: and there are many Adviſes to this purpoſe.

Firſt, Take the Bible, open it, and read it with the ſame attention, reverence, and reſolution to follow it, as if Chriſt living on the earth either by reaſon of ſickneſſe, or ſome other occaſion, not being

being able to go to him thy self, thou shouldst send some speciall friend with thy humble desires to Christ, to advise thee what to beleeve and do, and Christ should send a Letter to thee by that friend. How exceedingly wouldst thou prize that Letter? how wouldest thou rejoyce and long to read it? how strictly wouldest thou observe every syllable? Goe, take the Bible, open it, and do likewise. Wee do not read that ever Christ writ any thing with his own hand, save that which he wrote upon the ground, *John* 8. and what that was wee know not. And what might be the reason? might not one, if not the chiefest reason be, lest we should idolize that place of Scripture, and despise the rest in compari-

ſon of that: it is not the hand, but the ſpirit of Chriſt that gives authority to Scripture: we have ſtrange opinions of the bodily preſence of Chriſt; we think, had we lived in his dayes, we would have gone to him, and acknowledged our ſins, and craved pardon and direction, and ſcarce doubt but we ſhould have obtained both: but we conſider not we have as neer and as certain a way to obtain them now as then; nay, we have the ſame way as they had; for it was their faith that made them whole, and by faith we may be made ſo too in reſpect of ſpiritual diſeaſes. So, if an Angel ſhould bring a meſſage from heaven to us, how would we obſerve and follow it? The Scripture ſhould be of as great power and authority with us, as that

Meſſage,

Message, and indeed more; for if it were possible that such a Message should contradict any thing in the Scripture, the Scripture must be beleeved before it. But of this more largely in the fifth Consideration.

Secondly, Read every verse in the Bible with this consideration, that the holy Spirit of God, when hee inspired the Apostle, Prophet, or other Pen-men of the holy Scriptures to write that place, did particularly intend thy good in it; for wee must not conceive that the Scripture was written for their good only who lived in those times when those severall Books were published; but to all ages, for every particular man that should live in those severall generations. The Scripture it self is

plain in this particular; *Rom.* 15. 4. *For whatsoever things were written afore time, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope,* Deut. 29. 29. *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but these things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of the Law.*

Nay, we read of a particular promise made to a particular person upon a speciall occasion; if any part of Scripture were not to extend to every particular person that should live while the world lasts, one would think it should be that; yet even that very promise the Apostle brings, even that, as a promise particularly to be applied to every Christian: compare but these places, *Heb.* 13. 5.

13.5. *Josh.* 1.5. The Scripture like a well made Picture looks upon every one in particular, so directly, as if it looked upon none else: we generally read the Scriptures as we hear Sermons, without a particular and personall application of them; if a godly Minister should come home to any one of our houses, and take one aside, and tell one privately and feelingly, you professe your selves Christians, but there is little or nothing of Christianity appears in your lives, you live not as becomes the Gospel of Jesus Christ; it would startle us; we hear the same in the Pulpit, and we let it passe as a thing not concerning us: if one should come from an house of uncleanenesse, and hear a voice from Heaven, saying, *Whoremongers and adul-*

terers God will judge, it would ſtrike terrour into that mans heart; he reads the ſame words in the Scripture, and they are a dead letter to him.

Thirdly, Read the Scripture to a right end for which it was written, not for cuſtome, or that you might be able to diſcourſe, and becauſe you are aſhamed to be ignorant of thoſe things which you conceive every Chriſtian ſhould know, and having an occaſion divers times in company to talk of ſuch matters, then you would be loth to be able to ſay nothing; but conſider what end the Scripture was writ for, *Rõ.*15.4 *Rev.*3.10.1 *Pet.*2.2. 2 *Tim.* 3.16. and many other places, ſet them down: our knowledge, our affectionss, and our lives are quite out of frame, and thou

thou must go to the holy Scriptures there to finde out directions to cure these distempers: and in a word, that thou may'st be able to know, admire, love, fear, trust, and serve God more then thou doest; thou should'st never read any part of the word of God, without a particular intention to advantage thy selfe in these particulars by thy reading.

Fourthly, Thou must humbly and earnestly pray to the Lord to give thee his Spirit to understand what thou readest in his Word; take heed of going with thine own humane spirit, and in the strength of thy learning, to search out the deep things of God; go to the shallowes of the workes, which wee call the works of Nature, and thou shalt finde that thou art not a-

ble to fathome them; the winde thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but knoweſt not whence it comes, nor whither it goes; and how canſt thou preſume to underſtand the great myſteries of God, which the Angels themſelves deſire to look into, without the help of the Spirit of God which teacheth wiſdome ſecretly? let thy deſires be fervent, for the things written in the Word of God are thy life; deſire the Lord to give thee a powerfull, ſpirituall, and experimentall knowledge of the truths that thou ſhalt read.

Fifthly, Promiſe to the Lord that if he will but reveal to thee his will, thou wilt do it, and obey him in it, whether it be good or evill; *Jer.* 42. 6. whether it be pleaſing or diſpleaſing to thine own

own will: we do not use to tell any one a receipt to cure a disease he is sick of, if we know he is resolved not to take it; nor do thou satisfie thy selfe with a neutrality, to finde thy selfe neither resolved to follow, nor not to follow what thou shalt understand: it is an hard thing when one whom God hath loved so much, shall give no other return of all his goodnesse but this, that he doth not finde his heart to hate and rebell against him: many people do little better then use the Scripture as a charme, they think by reading so many Chapters a day, they shall be cured of all spirituall diseases: had they not as good think, that by hanging some Chapters or two about their neck, they shall be cured of some corporall disease? if

if one should have a receipt to cure the gout, and he should read it over every day twice or thrice, and think thereby to be cured, though he never took what was prescribed; so it is with him that thinks the bare reading of the Word of God will do him any good without being, beleeving, and doing accordingly.

Sixthly, When thou art thus prepared, read that place which thou intendest to meditate of, and consider what the true meaning of the place is, to thy understanding thereof before thou didst crave the assistance of the Spirit of God; but if the place be knotty and hard to be understood, passe it by, for such places are not proper places of meditation, but of study; thou must choose those places of Scrip-

Scripture as are fit for the affectionate, not the speculative part of Divinity, such as may more affect the heart, then busie the braine to understand it; and thou must not be curious to raise nice observations from the words, but take those truths that lie open in the Text.

First, Because those truths that lie hidden in one place of Scripture, are obvious in another.

Secondly, Because when the braine is much imployed, the heart lyes dead without affections.

Thirdly, Because that time thou spendest in finding out curious observations, may be farre more profitably spent in working thy heart to holy affections and resolutions, from some other truth that will presently occur from the words.

Lastly,

Lastly, It shewes that there is not so great spirituall hunger after righteousnes as there should be; for hungry men do not use to stand and pick bones, when they have meat enough to eat.

Seventhly, When thou hast raised any observation from the words, then thou art to put one of these three questions to thy selfe; Do I thus? Is it thus with me? and, believe I thus? One or two, or all of these will belong to every Text; some to all, and all to some, as *Luke* 12.32. *Fear not little flock, it is your Fathers good will to give you the Kingdom*: Do I thus? that is, for the first branch, *Fear not*; do I fear? Then, Is it thus with me? am I little in mine own eyes? am I one of Christ's flock? am I one of that small number that shall be saved?

ſaved? Laſtly, Do I believe this, that God will give the Kingdom of Heaven to ſuch?

Eighthly, If thou doeſt find, that thou art, doeſt, or believeſt as the Word requires, give God the praiſe, humbly acknowledging that it is not thy doing at all, either that thou art, or doeſt, or believeſt what thou ſhouldeſt; and if thou findeſt that thou prideſt thy ſelfe in ſtead of being thankfull, as if they were from thy ſelfe, or that by any of them as thine act thou mayeſt be juſtified, then doe but think in how many other things thou faileſt, and how even in theſe very particulars, if thou conſidereſt either the meaſure, manner, ground, and end, thou ſhalt find them all to be defective, and thy beſt righteouſneſſe not onely to be ragged, but filthy too. Ninthly,

Ninthly, If thou findeſt that either it is not with thee, or that thou doſt not, or beleeveſt not as the Word requires, then,

Firſt, Humble thy ſelf before the Lord, and deſire pardon and help for the future.

Secondly, Seriouſly conſider what is the reaſon (if it be that thou beleeveſt not) why thou art not eſtabliſhed in that truth: ſay to thy ſelf, O my ſoul, God can neither be deceived, nor deceive, and that this is his word that we now read and meditate on, is more certain then any reaſon that can poſſibly be brought againſt it; conſider that generally the howes and whyes of Gods truths and works are the things that ſtumble us; as, how can there be three perſons and yet but one God? and, why ſhould God hate

hate *Esau*, and love *Jacob*? in those cases say to thy selfe, that for the whys and howes of Gods word and truths, it is curiosity and pride to enquire of them, except God does reveal them, and we ought to mortifie our desire of knowing them: as that of our Saviour takes place in this case; *Blessed are they that beleeve and see not.*

Thirdly, Think with thy self, if thou canst remember any other place or places that confirms the truth that thou doubts of.

Fourthly, Know that that which thou art mainly to enquire of, is of the meaning of the Word of God, not of the truth of it; for we are seriously to consider, whether such a place holds forth such a point, not (it appear-

appearing to be the plaine meaning of the Text) whether it be true or no, if it be a thing that thou doeſt not which thou ſhouldſt do, or doeſt which thou ſhouldſt not do; then ſeriouſly conſider what are the reaſons and grounds of thy diſobedience, and thou ſhalt find them to be either the pleaſure, profit, or honour of the world; and ſay, alas, O my ſoul, can we be ſo deceived as to be put off with vanities, ſuch as by experience we have known to be vanities, and by faith much more? Shall we leave an Heaven of joys, the God of mercies? ſhall we leave Chriſt, who hath ſo loved us, that he left all, even the boſome of his Father, and emptied himſelf of all his glory, and filled himſelfe with our miſery? ſhall we leave all

all these for these, vanities which we must leave, and will leave us? Consider the impediments that hinder thee from doing thy duty; consider the temptations and occasions of thy sin; consider the means and motives to avoyd it: remove the impediments; avoyd the occasions; use the means; and think of the motives to do that which the Lord commandeth: but thou must neither think to find out these, nor to use the means, or avoyd the occasions, &c. without imploring humbly and earnestly the direction and assistance of the Spirit of God, to assist and direct thee in the premisses; for you must know, that you must find out and use spirituall Motives, or else thy very avoyding of sin is sin, when it is done

upon

upon carnall grounds or ſinfull motives.

Tenthly, When thou haſt finiſhed all thy Meditations,

Firſt, Thou art to entreat the Lord, that hee would work all theſe truths upon thy heart, and faſten them as a nail in a ſure place, that his Word may not be a dry breſt unto thee, nor thou a barren wilderneſſe unto it.

Secondly, Thou art to bleſſe God for any ſpirituall frame of heart that is either wrought or diſcovered in thee by this Exerciſe.

Laſtly, Chuſe ſome ſpeciall truth or point (in which thou are either moſt defective, or wherein thou haſt found moſt reliſh, which thou haſt moſt occaſion to make uſe of that day) and

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keep it by thee to think of; and do as those that walk in a garden of fragrant flowers, if one may have leave, generally hee takes some along with him, to smell to the rest of the day: do thou binde up some spirituall truths out of thy Meditation, and do likewise.

Last *Adv.* The last great Advice, and that which must serve for an Antidote, lest all the other Cautions and Advices being observed, they should be turned into poyson to us, is, that we should often meditate, and never be satisfied in our souls, until we come to a cleer Gospel experimental knowledg of Christ, without which indeed, we are not worthy of the name of Christians; for are wee not call'd Christians from the very name? And doubtles, if we have

not

not a right knowledg of Christ, we shall make up a Christ to our selves of our prayers, and fastings, and almes, and repentance; and woe be to that soul that at the last day shall have nothing to trust to but his graces and duties, which will accuse him in stead of pleading his cause: and two things especially we should endeavour to know of Christ; first, the excellency of the person and mysteries of Christ. Secondly, the love of Christ.

First, For the excellency of his person, though to say he was both God and man, is indeed to include all; yet some few things I shall speak to manifest this point.

First, That all his people do receive from him grace for grace; *John* 1. 16. Now if we consider the

the vast emptinesse and spirituall wants of the people of God, we must needs conclude that he must be an Ocean of excellency that must continually supply them.

Secondly, (For I shall be very brief, setting down rather heads of Meditation, then Sermon-wise, to dilate upon them) Consider the dignity of his sufferings; for they did satisfie the Justice of God, and that could not be satisfied without somthing of infinite value; nor could it have been done by him save only by reason of the dignity of his person.

Thirdly, Consider how he suffered; though the pains he suffered were exceeding great, yet was it without any abatement at all of his love of, and confidence in God; for while he satisfied the

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Juſtice of God by his paſſive obedience, in ſuffering the penalty of the Law; he alſo ſatisfied and fulfilled the righteouſneſs of the Law, by his active obedience, which was a wonder full thing, that in the midſt of all his agony and all his Fathers anger, while he was laying upon him the puniſhment of the iniquity of us all, and ſpared him not, that even then there ſhould be no abatement at all of his confidence in, and love of his Father, but that he ſhould love him and truſt in him as much as at any other time; for had there been any abatement, and had he not loved God then with all his ſoul, with all his might, and with all his ſtrength (and the ſame may be ſaid of his truſting in God) his ſufferings could never have ſatisfied

tisfied for sinne, but themselves had stood in need of forgiveneſſe.

Fourthly, Consider that saying of our Saviour, *John* 14. 9. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*: the speech of *Philip* is as if he should say; Wee indeed see a great deal of holineſſe and wisdom in thy words and actions, but would we could see the Father; surely there would be a world of holineſſe and wisdom in his words and actions; if he would have lived amongst men as thou Lord hast done, surely then it had sufficed. Now our Saviours answer is as if he should say to *Philip*, If the Father himselfe had taken humane nature, and lived amongst men, he would not have spoke one word more, or other-

wise, not done one action more or otherwise then I have done, he would not, nay could not have spoke, or done more wisely then I have done; *He that hath seen me, hath seen my Father.*

Fifthly, Consider that those who have had the greatest and highest revelations of divine things, have alwayes had the highest esteem of, and have most magnified Christ. Saint *Paul* rapt into the third heaven, and saw and heard things there, which was neither possible, nor lawful to be uttered; yet no man speaks higher things of Christ then he, he *desires to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*, accounts all other knowledg but drosse and dogs meat; such knowledge as dogs and swine,

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reprobates may have; nay, one ſtep further, the very Angels in heaven, though they have the beatificall viſion, yet notwithſtanding they deſire to look into the great myſteries of the Goſpel, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. Therefore never think that thou haſt attained to any meaſure of Chriſtian knowledge before thou ſeeſt an excellency in Chriſt, and an heighth and depth in the myſteries of the Goſpel; which if thou ſhalt not do, ſay within thy ſelf, it is ſo evident that nothing is more in the word of God, that Chriſt is the end of all the ceremoniall Laws, and all the Propheſies of the old Teſtament; that all the Prophets, nay all the Angels give witneſs; and the Apoſtle cleerly ſays, that *there is no controverſie* of this matter of the greatneſſe of Goſpel

myſteries, and therefore that I do not admire them, it certainly proceeds from my ignorance of them; for if it proceeded from knowledge, without doubt the Apoſtles that had moreknowledg then I, and the Angels which had more knowledg then the Apoſtles, would never have deſired to have known more of them: And after thou haſt wrought this upon thy heart, and art fully convinced of the truth of it, that there is no knowledg, not onely not ſo profitable, but not ſo ſweet, nor ſo excellent as this, then humbly beſeech the Lord that he would ſhew unto thee, teaching thee by his Spirit the deep things of God, and that he would not only do it to informe and enlighten thy underſtanding in, but to inamour thy will of

the beauties of the mysteries of Christ: we stand doating and gazing upon hamane knowledge, which is but like a poor glow-worme compared to the Sun of righteousnesse; but alas poor thing, it hath neither light nor heat, compared to the truths of the Gospel: and we must look upon Christ as the only author and finisher of our faith, and justifier of our persons; though we do all that hath been mentioned, yet we must not so much as make our doings, or not doings the least ingredient in our justification: and as *Solomon* speaks concerning our wisdom, so we must do in the matter of holinesse; *Leane not to thine own wisdome*, saith *Solomon*; not onely not rely upon it, but lean on it: we must not partly trust in

our own wisdom, and partly in the wisdom of God, but we must wholly rely upon his wisdom: so, we must not partly rely upon Christs merits, and partly upon our own; but wholly on Christ: those sins which we do not commit, we are not innocent of; and those holy duties that we do perform, we are not innocent in; therefore neither can we escape hell, nor attain heaven by any thing that wee do, or not do: and the reason why wee either avoyd sin, or perform holy duties, or frequent ordinances, is not because thereby we shall be justified, but that thereby wee may glorifie God and Christ, and because therein wee have communion with Christ, and are made more conformable unto him, and made more capable

of

of more of Christ. When we go to some stately Palace, where we have appointed to meet some deer friend whom wee love with our whole soul, though we have never so much entertainment there when we come, yet if wee neither see, nor enjoy the company of our so exceedingly loved and desired friend, wee rather weep then rejoyce, notwithstanding the feasts and buildings which wee taste and see: Prayer, hearing the Word, the Lords Supper, are stately Ordinances and rich Feasts; yet if we meet not Christ there, they are but dry brests and barren wildernesses to a soul that loves Christ.

Secondly, Now the main thing that hinders a poor soul from coming unto Christ, is, that it

is not cleerly satisfied of Christs love and willingnesse to receive her: to this point therefore by the blessing of God I shall speak more largely, and as cleerly as the Lord shall inable me; this therefore may be said to that point: Art thou not satisfied of the love and willingnesse of Christ to receive thee? What can Christ say or do more then he hath done? suppose Christ from Heaven should bid thee write downe what expressions soever thou wouldest or couldest invent, and bid thee call all the Saints in the whole world, and all the Angels in heaven, and bid you consult together, and write down the highest, fullest, cleerest, and largest expressions of love, and he wil set his hand and seal to them, would that satisfie? surely God

and

and Christ have done more; for the Holy Ghost comes not short of the expressions of love of whatsoever the Angels in heaven could invent, thou hast his hand and seale to them in his Word; thou wouldest be a looser if thou shouldest make another draught of love for Christ to set his hand to, and take that in stead of the expressions of love which he hath already ratified and confirmed by his Word, his Oath, his Seal, that thou mighest have strong consolation: Suppose that thou shouldest search the whole world to find out the fondest, lovingest and tendrest parent in the world, and when thou hast found her, thou shouldest observe with what love, care, and bowels of affection she carried her selfe towards her little Infant, how

she

thee breaks her sleep, and even her very heart when her child is sick, and never complains of her pains and costs, and never thinks she can do or suffer enough for the little Infant: now if thou shalt say within thy self; O that I was sure that God loved me as much as this woman loves her child: well, would that satisfie? then be satisfied, God loves thee more: *Isa.* 49. 15. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet will not I forget thee*: the Lord doth not say, can *women*? but *a woman*, *any* woman: find out that woman which thou suppossest is the most unlikely to forget her child, yet God is more unlikely to forget thee; nay it is more possible that

that all the women of the world should forget their children, then God; for though the question be put in the singular number, *Can a woman?* yet the answer is in the plurall, not *she* may, but *they may*, they all may. Further again; Suppose thou wert at the solemnizing of a marriage of the lovingest couple in the whole world, and shouldest observe with how much joy and love the Bridegroom carried himselfe toward the Bride, even in the midst and height of all his nuptiall solemnities; wouldst thou not be satisfied if thou didst know that God did not only love thee with that tender love of compassion with which the lovingest mother in the world loves her Infant, but with that love of complacencie which the Bridegroom beareth

to

to, and with which he rejoyceth over his Bride: whose love was equall to their espousals? then be satisfied, for God doth so; *Isa.* 62.5. *And as a Bridegroome rejoyceth over his Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee:* Nay surely, I may say, that the holiest Saint in the whole world, when by the cleerest discoveries of Gods love unto him, his heart is most enflamed; nay further, that the highest Angell in Heaven doth not love God so much, as God loves the poorest and meanest Saint in the whole world; *for God so loved the world*, it is such a *sic*, that there is no *sicut* for it, not that of the Angels unto him; nothing can expresse it to the ful, save onely the greatness of the gift which hee out of his love gave to, and for his people, even

even the Lord Jesus Christ.

To conclude, Do but consider what Christ hath done, and if thou art fully satisfied of that, thou canst have no cause to have the least doubt of his willingnesse to do whatsoever more is to be done for thee; for that which is to be done is nothing in comparison of that which he hath already done for those that are his.

First, Nothing in respect of excellency, for the Apostle brings that in, *He will much more give us all things*: also for God to give thee Christ, is much more then to give thee Heaven: as to give thee Heaven is much more then to give thee all temporall blessings, *Mat.* 6.33. If one that ought thee 10000 pounds, should have payed thee nine thousand

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nine hundered ninety nine, thou wouldest no whit doubt, but he will pay thee the residue, especially if it stood upon the forfeiture of his credit; how much more shalt thou assure thy self of Gods doing for thee whatsoever is behind, since he hath already done so much!

Secondly, The great matter of difficulty is over; indeed it cost Christ dear, and God the Father dear to redeem thee; God spared not his own Son; Christ spared not his bloud, nor his life; he suffered hunger, cold, and nakednesse, and reproach, the painfull and shamefull death of the Cross to redeem thee; but he lives for ever to make intercession for thee; he needs not rise off from his throne, nor put off his robes of glory to carry on the remainder

der of thy work of salvation; he sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for thee; *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool.*

Thirdly, The great matter of wonder is over also: That a great and mighty Monarch should marry a poor wretched and diseased woman, is a thing of great wonder; but its not so great a wonder that having married her, should make her partakers of all the glory and riches of his Kingdome; nay indeed, it was a wonder if he should not. That Christ who is the Lord of glory should marry a poor sinful soul is a wonder; but having married thee, that he should sanctifie thee, that he should present thee glorious, without spot or blemish, or any such

such thing, is no wonder; nay it was a wonder if he should still suffer thee to go in rags, and never adorn thee with the Jewels of his grace, and set upon thy head the Crown of glory. Therefore comfort thy self with these truths: Now to him that hath done so much, and much more, be glory and honour for ever, *Amen.*

FINIS.